L1 use in EFL instruction

A comparison of teachers' L1 use in EFL classrooms at lower and upper secondary levels: What explains variation in L1 use?

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Abstract

The present qualitative study examines how the first language (L1) is used in EFL instruction in lower and upper secondary school, and examines the explanations of the variations in use. It is based on observations and semi-structured interviews of six teachers in the 8th grade and at the VG3 level in the Oslo, Akershus and Oppland counties. The L1 is examined both in relation to quantity of use, and for the different situations it is used in.

The debate on how to use the L1 in EFL instruction is divided in two, between the proponents of L1 use and proponents of L2 only, and form the foundation in the theoretical framework, in combination with language learning approaches involving second language acquisition, the concept of scaffolding and comprehensible input.

The L1 used in the observations were registered and coded in the analysis process, whereas the interviews offered an understanding of the potential explanatory factors that influence the teachers' L1 use. The findings from the two different levels were then compared to each other.

The findings of this study indicate that there are variations both in terms of quantity and purpose of L1 use. The L1 seems to be used quite inconsistently regardless of level, and it appears that the factors influencing the teachers' use are connected to a combination of their proficiency level, their L1/L2 attitude, their ability to adjust their L2 in teaching, and their perception of their students' comprehension.

Next, the variations in patterns of use appear to vary in consonance with the students' proficiency level, in addition to their level of maturation. There is a more widespread use of the L1 at the lower secondary level, compared to the quite limited use of the L1 for the upper secondary level.

In the discussion I argue that the critical and deliberate approach to the use of the L1 in EFL instruction, regardless of attitude and level of teaching, is important for the learning outcomes.

Sammendrag

Målet med denne kvalitative studien er å undersøke hvordan norsk som førstespråk (L1) brukes i engelskundervisning på ungdomsskolen og i videregående skole, og samtidig finne ut hva som forårsaker variasjonen i L1-bruk. Undersøkelsen er basert på observasjoner og halv-strukturerte intervju med seks lærere fra 8. trinn og fra VG3. L1 blir undersøkt både i forhold til hvor mye det brukes og i hvilke situasjoner det blir brukt i.

Debatten om L1-bruk i EFL-undervisning er delt i to, mellom de som forsvarer L1-bruk og de som forsvarer konsekvent L2-bruk, og dette danner grunnlaget for det teoretiske grunnlaget, i kombinasjon med språklæringstilnærminger som Krashen's comprehensible input og begrepet "scaffolding" (støttende undervisning).

L1-bruken som ble observert ble registrert og kodet i analyseprosessen, mens intervjuene ga en dypere forståelse av de eventuelle forklarende årsakene til lærerens L1-bruk. Funnene fra de to forskjellige nivåene ble deretter sammenlignet med hverandre.

Funnene fra denne undersøkelsen indikerer at det er variasjon både i forhold til mengden av L1 som ble brukt og i hvilke situasjoner L1 brukes i. L1-bruken varierer uavhengig av nivå, og det kan virke som faktorer som påvirker lærerens bruk er knyttet til en kombinasjon av deres faglige nivå, deres holdning til L1/L2, deres evne til å justere L2 i undervisning og lærerens opplevelse av studentenes forståelse.

Videre varierer L1-bruken i forhold til elevenes faglige nivå og modenhet. Dette gjenspeiles i den utbredte L1-bruken på 8. trinn sammenlignet med den begrensede L1-bruken på VG3-nivået.

I diskusjonen argumenterer jeg for at en kritisk og gjennomtenkt bruk av L1 i EFL-undervisning, uavhengig av holdning og nivå, er avgjørende for læringsutbyttet.

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1 Introduction

How do you teach English in Norwegian? Ben, VG3 teacher

My fascination for the teachers' use of the English language in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching started in my early years as a freshman at upper secondary school. I remember my first English lessons as quite frustrating, as the teacher used English and Norwegian interchangeably. Some weeks later, however, we received a new teacher. From the minute she walked in her British English filled the classroom, and it did not stop before the lesson was over and she left the room. After that, the entire atmosphere in the classroom changed, and English was from then on my favourite subject. Could it be that the extensive use of Norwegian influenced the language learning?

The contrast between these two teachers opened my eyes to the fact that the use of English in foreign language learning is of great importance. Even as a 15 year old student, without any professional expertise in appropriate learning strategies, it was obvious that the teachers' choice of language influenced the learning process, and not the least the class environment.

Later, my own experience as a teacher and a language teacher student at university increased my interest for the topic. My supervisor for my practice period was also of great inspiration due to his extreme deliberateness around his own use of English in his teaching. This was when my interest for the use of English and Norwegian in foreign language instruction was established. The answer to how you teach English in Norwegian is thus complicated; what effects can the use of the Norwegian language have for English language learning? Is it beneficial, or detrimental? Is it necessary for all levels of teaching? Is it necessary at all?

In the course of my studies I have written two papers concerning the use of the first language (Norwegian) in foreign language teaching. The first was written during my practice period, during which I investigated: "how important is it that both students and teachers communicate in the L2 in foreign language learning?" The paper's findings generated more questions than answers, and the conspicuous, new question was rather *how* the first language is used appropriately in teaching.

The second paper was written in the spring 2012, as a pilot for the present master thesis, and it investigated the teachers' attitudes and awareness to their own teaching more thoroughly. The research statement was as follows: "To what extent is the teachers' use of L1 and L2 in the EFL [English as a Foreign Language] classroom a deliberate decision?" The main findings indicate that the teachers have differing thresholds on when to resort to the L1, and with regard to what situations they find L1 use appropriate for themselves as well as their students. All in all, the teachers' decision on the use of L1 in EFL instruction appears as important and influential for the language learning process.

The present thesis aims to further explore this topic, and the research statement has the following wording: "A comparison of teachers' L1 use in EFL classrooms at lower and upper secondary levels: What explains variation in L1 use". Furthermore, it investigates both the quantity of L1 use, in addition to the different functions of its use. Section 1.2 below presents the research statement in its entirety.

In the following, the importance related to the teachers' choice of language in EFL instruction is accounted for. A brief overview over previous research is integrated in this section, and is followed by the presentation of the research statement. Finally, an outline of the thesis will follow, and some definitions of key terms for this study are provided.

1.1 The importance of the teachers' choice of language in the EFL classroom

The current curriculum *Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2006* (LK06) does not give any specific guidelines with regard to what language the teachers should use in EFL teaching. Consequently, the teachers decide on whether they want to include the L1 in their teaching, or not. Their choice may have an effect on the language learning process, and it is therefore important that the teachers have reflected on their choice of classroom communication language. This is elaborated on in the following sections, and in detail in the theoretical framework chapter.

1.1.1 The LK 06

Neither the current curriculum or the English subject curriculum in *Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2006* (LK06) specify the preferred language of communication for English teaching. Previous curricula, like *Mønsterplan for grunnskolen 1974* (M74) and

Læreplanverket for den 10-åringe grunnskolen 1997 (L97), have specified a preference for classroom communication in English, as Bollerud (2002) cites in her master thesis: "L'97 states, 'Most classroom communication shall be in English'" (p. 24). LK06, in comparison, allows a high degree of freedom in the choice of methods, and it is therefore the teachers themselves who decide what teaching methods they want to use.

On the other hand, general goals regarding oral interaction are explicitly formulated in the English subject curriculum, such as:

> *Being able to express oneself orally and in writing in a foreign language is a key element in developing competence in the foreign language in question and is a common thread in the competence aims for both levels. These skills are important tools in the work to understand and use the new language in increasingly varied and more demanding contexts across cultures and subject areas. Having oral skills means being able to both listen and speak.* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013*)*

Oral communicative goals are also made explicit in the competence aims such as: "express him/herself in writing and orally in a varied, differentiated and precise manner, with good progression and coherence" (after year 10), "elaborate on and discuss linguistically demanding texts with a social or political perspective" (Social Studies English), and "use suitable language appropriate to the situation in a variety of oral and written genres" (Social Studies English)(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013).

Since the LK06 does not define any specific guidelines for the teachers' use of L1 in EFL teaching, the curriculum will not be further accounted for in the current discussion in relation to this thesis. The discussion will instead be based on factors related to the teachers and students.

1.1.2 The importance of the teachers' and their L1 use

The importance of the teachers' decisions on what language to use in their foreign language teaching is broadly accounted for in relevant educational literature. This will also be examined thoroughly in the theoretical framework in chapter 2. Nevertheless, the importance of using the second language (L2) in the foreign language classroom is ingrained in the minds of most language teachers (Cook, 2001a). Empirical research suggests that teacher talk makes up between 69 and 75 per cent of the classroom language (Cook, 2001b, p. 157, 160; Ellis, 1994, p. 582; Levine, 2011, p. 99). This high proportion of teacher talk indicates that the teachers' speech is predominant in classroom communication. Grim (2010) also emphasises

the importance of input in relation to the FL classroom: "Input is considered to be the most valuable element in language learning. The amount of input determines how much learners are exposed to the L2" (p. 194).

The discussions about whether the amounts of L1 used, and the different uses of L1, are beneficial or detrimental for language learning are extensive and heterogeneous. Whether it affects the language learning process or not is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to bear in mind that this provides the setting for the entire discussion. The teachers' choice of language may affect the language learning and consequently the learning outcome, and it is therefore important that the teachers make deliberate decisions about to what extent they want to integrate the L1 in the EFL classroom. As touched upon, the L1 may be a potential asset in the classroom, but empirical literature presents varying arguments as to how it can be used appropriately to benefit language learning.

In the history of research on L1 use in the FL classroom, the first studies conducted typically focused on the quantity of L1, while it gradually focused more on other additional variables such as functions of use. The use of L1 in relation to quantity has been quite thoroughly investigated in an educational language research perspective. The study of the different purposes of L1 use has also been in focus, although to a lesser degree. However, the comparison and contrasting of lower educational levels with higher levels have received very little attention from applied linguists. In a Norwegian context, Bollerud (2002) is the only researcher who in her master thesis has investigated to what extent Norwegian as a first language has been used in English teaching in primary school.

Moreover, the field of investigation can mainly be divided into two opposing approaches, in which both of them acknowledge an *optimal* use of the L1 in the FL classroom. The two sides do simply not agree on what optimal use is, and the opinions about how much, and for what purposes the L1 should be used differ greatly. Findings indicate that factors like the teachers' own attitudes, the teachers' competence, the perception of the students' comprehension, and the teachers' ability to adjust their L2 can predict the actual L1 usage.

Two of the most prominent researchers in the area of L1 and L2 use in the classroom are Duff and Polio, and they have conducted two studies that specifically pose questions regarding the use of L1 in an FL context (Levine, 2011, p. 73-4). In their first study, they yield a very broad range in the ratio of L1 use, from ten to 100 per cent (Duff & Polio, 1990, p. 161). In their discussion, different variables related to the L1/L2 use are examined, but

there was not enough continuity in these variables that any "influential" relationships of importance could be seen (Duff & Polio, 1990, p. 161).

Polio and Duff (1994) also performed a study in which the findings illustrated a general lack of teacher awareness as to how, when, and the extent to which they actually used the L1, and it also displayed very inconsistent findings (p. 320). However, the most common L1 use found in their study of university students was for isolated L1 words related to the academic context.

Furthermore, there are two studies that are related to the comparison of different school levels, which is Thompson's (2006) doctorial dissertation and Grim's (2010) analysis. Thompson (2006) found that the level of instruction might have influenced the type of L1 use (p. 228). Indeed, at beginning levels, the L1 was mostly used for grammar instruction, while, at intermediate levels, translation of new vocabulary was the primary reason for the L1.

Grim (2010) identifies the same categories of L1 use as in previous research, which is also used for this thesis (see chapter 3). His overall findings suggest that High School teachers and college instructors share some common L1 usages: empathy/solidarity, immediate translation and delayed translation and that they appear to differ in metalinguistic explanations, task instructions and class management/discipline (Grim, 2010, p. 203). Grim (2010) thereby implies that the teachers' language choice may be based on presuppositions of what learners can cognitively handle, and suggests as Thompson that higher levels of instructions' main objective for L1 use is academically related (pp. 206-7). Grim's (2010) findings also show inconsistencies in relation to quantity of L1 use, and no linear relationship between students' proficiency level and quantity of use is established (p. 206). Overall, all the research findings display inconsistent amounts of L1 use, but are more consistent with regard to the different situations L1 is used in.

The one Norwegian contribution to the area of L1 use in the EFL classroom is as mentioned the master thesis of Bollerud (2002). She touches upon the quantity measures of L1 use in primary school, and concludes that "this is first and foremost because of a high percentage of unqualified English teachers" (Bollerud, 2002, p. 93). The study at hand will further explore the topics that have been described above. A more detailed discussion of the previous research can be found in Appendix 3.

1.2 Research statement

As mentioned above, the study at hand investigates the variation in L1 use at the 8th grade of lower secondary school and the VG3 level of upper secondary school. More specifically it examines the quantity of L1 use in addition to the different situations that initiate L1 use. First of all, I investigate whether the L1 quantity and different uses change as the student proficiency levels increase from the 8th grade to the VG3 level. Next, these findings are compared in order to explain any variation in L1 use. My research question is therefore as follows: "A comparison of teachers' L1 use in EFL classrooms at lower and upper secondary levels: What explains variation in L1 use?"

In the present study, I will investigate whether a relationship between the quantity and functions of L1 use and different external factors can be established, and search for a more complete taxonomy in the variations in use. The comparison of these two levels will further investigate a gap that is shown in the related research. Equally important, no previous research on this topic has been found in a Norwegian context. However, it must be taken into account that this master thesis has a limited scope, and that all findings only will be vague implications in a larger context.

Also, the objective of the present study is not to judge the efficiency of the detrimental effects that the L1 can have in EFL learning and teaching, but rather to bring new empirical evidence to the functions of L1 use in foreign language classes, as well as an initial comparison of L1 usage between lower and upper secondary levels.

1.3 An outline of the thesis

In the following chapter 2 the theoretical framework of this study is presented, in which relevant literature and empirical research are accounted for. Chapter 3 presents the methods and procedures I have used. In chapter 4 the findings will be presented, before they are discussed in relation to the empirical theory in the discussion in chapter 5. The final chapter 6 concludes with practical implications for the study's findings and provides suggestions for further research. Copies of material used for the study at hand can be found in the Appendices.

1.4 Definitions

A number of concepts and terms that are used throughout the thesis are explained below:

In the following the first language (L1) is defined as the native language of the speakers, and for this thesis it is synonymous with the term mother tongue, i.e. *Norwegian*. The term second language (L2) refers to the target language in the present study, i.e. *English*. The terms first and second language will be used interchangeably with the abbreviations L1 and L2. The terms second language classroom and foreign language classroom will also be used interchangeably, referring to the learning environment of the language English in a Norwegian educational setting. There is disagreement about whether English is considered a second or foreign language in the Norwegian educational system, but since the specific definition is irrelevant for this thesis aim, I will not touch upon what is the more proper term, and use both of them.

The term codeswitching will also be used, which refers to the systematic, alternating use of two or more languages in a single utterance or conversational exchange (Levine, 2011, p. 50).

Other relevant terms that are used in this thesis will be defined consecutively in the text.

2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I present the theoretical framework on which the present study is based. I start with a general introduction of the language learning process that unfolds in the classroom, more specifically a presentation of the concepts of second language acquisition and educational goals. The process of language learning is then elaborated on through the terms of input and output. Next, I present the topic of teacher talk and its importance. The L1 functioning under the umbrella term scaffolding tool is also introduced in relation to educational purposes. The partition between L1 proponents and L2 proponents is thereafter presented, in which each of them represent different views in relation to what they consider beneficial for language learning. Finally, several factors contributing to explaining the teachers' actual L1 use are deducted from the abovementioned literature and research, and are discussed. A summary concludes the theoretical chapter.

2.1 Language learning in the classroom

Language learning and the field that examines the human capacity to learn languages are thoroughly investigated in previous research and literature. The study of the aptitude and capacity to learn other languages than the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood, is called *second language acquisition* (SLA) (Ortega, 2009, pp. 1-2). The question of how the second and foreign languages are optimally acquired is relevant for second and foreign language learning, and SLA studies that are relevant for educational purposes typically investigate the learning *process*, including studies of for example how motivation or age affect the learning capacity.

On the other hand, there is also a widespread interest in the *products* or results of the language learning process. To achieve optimal results, goals are set. As Cook (2001a) explains, one preliminary assumption is that language teaching has many goals (p. 403). One of the main goals, directly specified in curricula worldwide, is that of communicative competence. Cook (2001b) defines communicative competence as knowledge of how language is used, more precisely defined as knowledge of how to use the language appropriately for all the activities in which the learners want to take part (p. 23).

The educational goals of foreign language learning will to a large extent determine how language teaching is carried out. In addition comes the teachers' own preference for choice of classroom communication language, as presented in chapter 1. The teachers'

methodology can be decisive for providing students with the right tools and necessary strategies to achieve their language learning goals. Indeed, the teachers should critically develop and demonstrate learning strategies, including their choice of communication language.

2.2 Input and output in classroom communication

The components that underpin the process of language learning can roughly be divided between the concepts of *input* and *output*, which both form the basis for their respective, separate fields of investigation. Input is defined as "the samples of language to which a learner is exposed" (Ellis, 1997, p. 5), whereas output is defined as "making meaning and producing messages" (Ortega, 2009, p. 62). Ellis (1997) emphasises the importance of both input and output in order to achieve the goals of language learning. He states: "Language learning cannot occur without some input" (Ellis, 1997, p. 5). Ellis (1997) also claims that we find conflicting opinions in the field of output, but that it is acknowledged that both input and output do play a role in second language acquisition (p. 49). Although all theories of second language acquisition recognise the need for input, they differ greatly in the importance that is attached to it; what role the input performs in language acquisition and in what form the input is optimal for language learning, are controversial questions (Ellis, 1994, p. 243).

The classroom is a major source of input for the foreign language learners, and how the input is given can influence the language learning. Krashen (1982), as one of the main proponents of input theory, states in his Monitor Hypothesis that language can be acquired only when we are exposed to a language structure of comprehensible input that is a little beyond our current level of competence. The tasks should thereof build upon the knowledge and skills the student already possesses, but still should be difficult enough to allow new learning to occur. Comprehensible input is defined in the formula of $i + 1$, where i represents the current stage we are at, and 1 represents new learning which is slightly more advanced than the current level (Krashen, 1982, p. 21). In other words, oral input in EFL instruction is a valuable element in language learning. However, relatively few studies have examined *how* the second and first languages are being used in the EFL classroom (Thompson, 2006, p. 19). Harmer (1991) writes:

> *There can be no doubt of the value of comprehensible input: the fact that students are hearing or reading language that they more or less understand must help them to*

> *acquire the language. If they are exposed to language enough they will most certainly be able to use some (or all) of it themselves.* (p. 37).

Furthermore, most researchers maintain that comprehensible input is necessary in FL learning and teaching (Grim, 2010, p. 194; Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 313). Grim (2010) specifies: "As long as the input is comprehensible, the more input a learner receives, the more he or she should acquire the L2" (p. 194). He also argues that it is evident that many teachers occasionally use the L1 in order to facilitate the teaching of the L2 (p. 194). Thus, it appears as the L1 can be beneficial for language learning, the question relates to how it is optimally used.

2.3 Teacher talk and its importance

The main component of oral input in a classroom setting is teacher talk. Wing (1980) emphasises that teacher talk in the foreign language classroom is a critical variable of considerable importance and complexity:

> *The active use of two languages, native [L1] and target [L2], and the dual instructional objectives of linguistic and communicative competence create a unique educational setting. Systematic investigation of how teachers function in this bilingual, bifunctional environment can provide information about the nature of input in this specialized classroom setting. This information is necessary for an understanding of how learning occurs in FL classes.* (p. 159).

Empirical research suggests that teacher talk makes up between 69 and 75 per cent of the classroom language (Cook, 2001b, p. 157, 160; Ellis, 1994, p. 582; Levine, 2011, p. 99). The high proportion of teacher talk illustrates the teachers' predominant role in classroom communication. Furthermore, Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) describe the EFL classroom situation and its teacher talk as an environment in which the teacher "can immerse the pupils in a comprehensible sea of language" (p. 180). The amounts of teacher talk strengthen the importance regarding the teachers' choice on L1 use in EFL instruction. The teachers are high exponents of input, and indeed, the studies of teacher talk can tell us more about how learning occurs. As Grim (2010) also emphasises: "Input is considered to be the most valuable element in language learning. The amount of input determines how much learners are exposed to the L2" (p. 194).

2.4 L1 as a scaffolding tool

The L1 is a device used for different purposes. From an L1/L2 perspective, the umbrella term scaffolding refers to the idea to use the L1 as a cognitive tool to limit the complexities of the context and gradually remove those limits as the learners gain the knowledge, skills and proficiency in order to best facilitate learning (Young, 1993). It would therefore be logical to assume that the quantity of L1 use and the different purposes it is used for change as a consequence of improved levels of student language proficiency (McMillan & Turnbull, 2009, p. 33).

The concept of scaffolding has its origins in the work of the psychologist Vygotsky as well as in studies of early language learning, and the concept used for this thesis is based on these fundamental ideas. There are several criteria for effective scaffolding to take place according to Vygotsky's theory, and there are two criteria in particular that are important for this thesis. The first one is *appropriateness of the instructional task* which means that the tasks should build upon the knowledge and skills the student already possesses, but should be difficult enough to allow new learning to occur (Foley, 1993). The other criterion is a *structured learning environment*, which will provide a natural sequence of thought and language, thus presenting the student with useful strategies and approaches to the task (Foley, 1993). In practice, this means that the foreign language the students already possess could be combined with proper amounts of L1 to facilitate language learning. It also means that the L1 should be limited in its use, thus allowing the students to "strive" for comprehension, as a part of the facilitative learning process. Consequently, the students will be offered useful strategies for foreign language comprehension. The assumptions behind these approaches are that the quantity and the functions of L1 change, and possibly decrease, as the proficiency level of the students improves. It also implies that the teachers have to appropriately adjust their L2/L1 to their students' needs and comprehension level.

Research studies covering the issue of the L1 as a scaffolding tool is very limited. One study that particularly investigates the differences between levels in proficiency is as mentioned Grim's (2010) analysis. He states that the L1 could have a role of metalinguistic scaffolding offering a better understanding of the L2 (Grim, 2010, p. 194). Nonetheless, the term scaffolding indicates that the L1 is used to facilitate learning in different ways, as will be illustrated in the following sections of this chapter. Moreover, regardless of the disagreements between the L1 and L2 proponents, the main premise for either L1/L2 use is that it benefits the students' language learning, and that it contributes to the goal

achievements of the learning process such as communicative competence. But still, as mentioned in the introduction, no clear relationship has yet been found in the amounts of L1 use and the students' proficiency level, even though systematic differences in patterns of L1 use have been established in some studies (Grim, 2010; Macaro, 2001; Thompson, 2006).

2.5 The two different approaches

With regard to L1 use in a foreign language classroom, there are quite different opinions as to what is best for the language acquisition. Since the late 1800's, different teaching methods and approaches have espoused the importance of L1 use in the FL classroom (Thompson, 2006, p. 19). Traditionally there has been reluctance to the use of L1 for the FL classroom although different eras of teaching have emphasized different approaches for the use of L1 and L2 (Cook, 2001a; Harbord, 1992; Levine, 2011; Simensen, 1998; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009), e.g., the Direct Method, Audiolingualism, Sociocultural Theory, and the Communicative Method (Thompson, 2006). Today, disagreement exists between those who believe that the L1 is detrimental for language acquisition and the ones who perceive the L1 as a practical tool that facilitates L2 acquisition, although these opinions are distributed along a continuum of L1 and L2 use (Grim, 2010, p. 194; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009, p. 4). Overall there does seem to be a consensus that L1 may be used legitimately in judicious situations, but the nuances are multifaceted and complex, and there are great variations within the two separate perspectives. The agreement that the L1 should be used and adjusted appropriately also leads us to the next complex question; what is optimal use? And what are appropriate adjustments?

The next sections will present the two main approaches, representing the different proponents and theorists. Their respective fundamental views and attitudes will initially be introduced, before their approaches will be illustrated as practical implications of specific situations that can transpire in the FL classroom. These situations are the same situations that will be used in the research process of this study.

2.5.1 Proponents of L1 use

For contemporary classrooms, it is evident that many teachers, if not most, occasionally use the L1 in order to facilitate the teaching of the L2 (Atkinson, 1987, p. 241; Grim, 2010, p. 194), and many researchers are of the opinion that judicious use of the L1 in a foreign language context is useful and beneficial for the learning outcome (Atkinson, 1987;

Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cook, 2001a; Macaro, 2001; Simensen, 1998; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). However, there are L1 proponents that support the use of L1 to a large extent; Atkinson (1987) "contends" that the L1 is a great potential classroom resource:

> *… it [the L1] has at all levels, a variety of roles to play which are at present consistently undervalued, for reasons which are for the most part suspect. I feel that to ignore the mother tongue [the L1] in a monolingual classroom is almost certainly to teach with less than maximum efficiency. (p. 247)*

In general, the proponents' of L1 use opinions can be summarised in that the L1 has a productive and important role to play for successful L2 learning. Cook (2001a) argues that even though it is beneficial to expose the students to as much L2 as possible, he emphasises the fact that this is "(…) not necessarily incompatible with L1 use in the classroom" (p. 409). The L1 use is justified through efficiency for the teacher and comprehension for the students (Atkinson, 1987; Cook 2001a, 2001b). Also, arguments such as naturalness and authenticity, and students' needs for authoritative role models and relationship builders are emphasised as reasons to use the L1 (Atkinson, 1987; Cook 2001a, 2001b).

The L1 proponents' perspective on the different uses of L1

Several L1 proponents suggest specific uses of the L1 that they consider appropriate in the foreign language classroom. The specific L1 functions will be presented below.

In translations: Atkinson (1987) promotes translation techniques as one of the most significant and judicious uses of L1 (p. 242). In situations where translation may be applicable McMillan and Turnbull (2009) suggest that codeswitching can be a valuable teaching strategy for words that have no first language cognates, especially if the words cannot be easily explained by paraphrasing or represented through gestures or pictures (p. 34). Codeswitching refers to the systematic, alternating use of two or more languages in a single utterance or conversational exchange (Levine, 2011, p. 50). Atkinson (1987) promotes the L1 as reinforcing in translations:

> *An exercise involving translation into the target language [the L2] of a paragraph or set of sentences which highlight a recently taught language item can provide useful reinforcement of structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native [the L1] and target languages [the L2].* (p. 244)

Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) also refer to the particular technique of *sandwiching* the translation of a new expression as an appropriate use of the L1. This term refers to the

process of articulating a statement in the L2, restating it in the L1 and then again in the L2 (p. 33). His main argument is that this is the quickest way to make authentic classroom communication possible.

For classroom management: Classroom management situations relevant for this thesis includes situations as disciplinary methods and task instructions. Cook (2001a) maintains that the L1 is efficient and almost a prerequisite for comprehension at low levels, pointing to examples that tasks in a book may be very troublesome for the pupils; "Unless translated into the L1, these instructions are unlikely to be more than words on a page, partially comprehensible through the teacher's skill at demonstration" (p. 415). As for explaining specific tasks and exercises to the students the main argument is efficiency in which leads to more effective learning, according to Cook (2001a, p. 415). For teacher maintenance of discipline, Cook (2001a) suggests that these situations often call for the use of the L1; "Saying 'Shut up or you will get a detention' in the L1 is a serious threat rather than practice of imperative and conditional constructions" (p. 415), which implies that an authoritative figure is best achieved through the first language. Atkinson (1987) also considers it more appropriate and useful to give instructions in the L1, particularly for lower levels (p. 243).

For expressing solidarity: For these purposes the teacher uses the L1 for a sense of closeness with students, either to show understanding or to create a friendly support. Informal chatting with the students is also considered as expressing solidarity. Cook (2001a) maintains that the main benefits of L1 use in these situations are personal contact and authenticity: "When using the L1, the teacher is treating the students as their real selves rather than dealing with assumed L2 personas." (p. 416). He also claims that the teacher gains contact with individual students through the L1, and not the L2 (Cook, 2001a, p. 416).

To explain grammar to the students: L1 use in these situations is often considered complementary and supplementary. The main advantages are supposedly increased student comprehension and efficiency for the teachers. According to Cook (2001a), explaining grammar in either L1 or the L2 is a practical issue, where the main argument for using the L1 is "efficiency of understanding by the students" (pp. 414-15). He argues that terms such as 'pronouns', 'possessive adjectives', 'plurals' and 'prepositions' will make little sense if the grammar differs from the students' L1, i.e. in Japanese, where they do not have such equivalents. Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) also argue that "(…) we can avoid real suffering [when learning grammar] and turn grammar into something positive" with the use of

bilingual techniques, more specifically meaning that the L1 and L2 enter into a "powerful alliance" (pp. 117-8).

To convey meaning: Cook (2001a) argues that the teacher can use the L1 to convey and check meaning of words or sentences (p. 414). He also argues that to use the L1 to convey meaning may be an efficient way to help learning and to feel natural in using the L2 in the classroom (Cook, 2001a, p. 414). Furthermore, Atkinson (1987) refers to checking comprehension in the L1 in the FL classroom as more "fool proof and quicker" than more inductive checking techniques (p. 243). According to Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) only a clarification in the L1 can make the pupils trust the FL expression, and make sure the comprehension is present (p. 75). Theorists essentially agree on the use of L1 to convey meaning to assure comprehension.

Summary

From the L1 proponents' perspective, the main arguments supporting appropriate L1 use in the abovementioned situations are student comprehension and teacher efficiency (Atkinson, 1987; Bollerud, 2002; Cook, 2001a; Harbord, 1992; Turnbull, 2001). A central argument that supports the assumption that L1 is beneficial in these situations is also authenticity, as opposed to a fictive, unnatural foreign language environment. To appear as an authoritative figure, and to strengthen relations between the teacher and student through the L1 is also considered appropriate.

2.5.2 Proponents of L2 use

Although teachers and theorists may disagree on the quantity and different purposes of L1 use in the classroom, most agree that communication in the FL classroom should be conducted in the L2 to the greatest possible extent, where the premise and goal is development of the language as a communicative tool (Harbord, 1992, p. 351). The proponents of L2 use strongly maintain a view in which the L2 is to be maximised, and the L1 use is kept to an absolute minimum, and only used in situations where it is viewed as beneficial.

Throughout the years, researchers have argued that that the presence of the L1 can prevent L2 acquisition since learners become less exposed to the L2 (Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1981; Turnbull, 2001). Turnbull (2001) refers to research findings in his article that show that exposure of L2 input to learners provide the strongest theoretical rationale for maximising

teachers' L2 use, and that input has been shown empirically to be crucial for second language learning (p. 532). Turnbull (2001) emphasises: "It seems logical to argue, then, that the more students are exposed to L2 input, the more they will learn" (p. 533).

Moreover, Chaudron (1988) emphasises that as many situations as possible should be presented in the L2 (p. 121). Not only do these proponents emphasise the importance of substantial exposure of L2, but they also maintain a vision that loss of L2 exposure causes detrimental consequences for the learning process. Generally, Ellis (1994) describes that the teachers deprive their learners of valuable input in the L2 by using the pupils' L1 to explain and organise tasks and to manage behaviour in the belief that this will facilitate the language-related goals of the lessons (p. 133). Wong-Fillmore (1985) also stresses the significant fact that an integral part of the students' language learning is trying to figure out what their teachers (and classmates) are saying (p. 35), consequently suggesting that there is no need to understand everything the teacher says. Indeed, it is implied by Wong-Fillmore (1985); that moderate amounts of non-comprehension in the EFL classroom can actually facilitate language learning. This is accordance with the concept of comprehensible input, as previously mentioned.

There are also approaches that are less rigid regarding the use of L1. One of the leading proponents within the active use of the L2, Turnbull (2001) argues: "For me, maximising the L2 does not and should not mean that it is harmful for the teacher to use the L1" (p. 535). He believes that exclusive use of the L2 is not a goal in itself, but that teachers need to maximise their L2 usage in the FL classroom. He concludes:

> *I believe that theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition and the empirical evidence presented provide persuasive support to the argument that teachers should aim to use the L2 as much as possible, and, by doing so, have a positive effect on learner's L2 proficiency. However, this does not mean that there is a linear relationship between teachers' L2 use and learners' L2 proficiency* (Turnbull, 2001, p. 535).

The proponents of L2 use share a view of maximising the use of L2, but they vary to some extent in their approaches on the quantity and specific uses of L1. There seems to be a general consensus that "(…) use of the L1 generally, is not a device to be used to save time for 'more useful' activities, nor to make life easier for the teacher or the students" (Harbord, 1992, p. 355).

The L2 proponents' perspective on the different uses of L1

As mentioned, the L1 can be used in several situations in the EFL classrooms. In the following the different uses will be presented, and these uses of L1 are the same as presented in section 2.5.1. above.

In translations: First of all, some L2 proponents suggest that the students may in fact comprehend situations where the teachers choose to translate, meaning that the teachers may translate unnecessarily. For this reason, they imply that the teachers should use alternative L2 strategies wherever possible. Harbord (1992) recommends specific translation techniques in which the teachers do not simply do word-for-word translations, and advises alternative L2 strategies such as "(…) visual prompts, mime, and evoking situational context to create a need for the item in question (for eliciting), together with paraphrase, definition, and multiple exemplification" (p. 354). Grim (2010) points out that immediate translations, where translations are given on the teachers initiative, do not give the students any chance to give any indication of their comprehension. This increases the probability of the translation being redundant, and consequently having detrimental effects on language learning. In delayed translations, where the students or misunderstandings prompt the translations, the chances for appropriate translations are increased (Grim, 2010, p. 206). Second, Wong-Fillmore (1985) also points out that translations may short-circuit the language learning process in two ways: the L2, before it is translated, is unmodified; and the students, anticipating a translation, tend to ignore the L2 (p. 35). Moreover, the L2 proponents anticipate that teachers adjust their L2 to their students' comprehension level, and that they actively, by adjusting their own L2, can avoid underestimating their students, in addition to offer them the opportunity to facilitate from situations of non-comprehension.

For classroom management: Authenticity and quantity of exposure are the main arguments for sustaining the use of L2 for classroom management, such as task instructions and discipline. Harbord (1992) points out that giving instructions for a task in the L2 is one of the most genuine opportunities for teacher-student communication in the classroom, and he claims that managing classes in the L1 "(…) seems an unfortunate decision which is likely to reflect negatively on the status of English as a means of communication" (p. 353). Hellekjær (2001) also provides arguments in favour of use of the L2 in classroom management; general and overriding requirements based on his own teaching in one of his articles: "[the teachers should] avoid continual lapses into Norwegian, the command of what may be called classroom management language is also a must (…)" (p. 192). He points to situations as

checking the attendance or organising group work as examples, which falls into the category of task instructions. As for the disciplinary situations, Chaudron (1988), as mentioned above, says that as many situations as possible should be presented in the L2: "… in the typical foreign language classroom, the common belief is that the fullest competence in the second language is achieved by means of the teacher providing a rich L2 environment, in which not only instruction and drill are executed in the L2, but also disciplinary and management operations" (p. 121). Polio and Duff (1994) also emphasise how classroom management instructions in the L2 represent "the most authentic and natural communication in the classroom" (p. 322).

For expressing solidarity: Expressing solidarity includes situations where the teachers use the L1/L2 to facilitate teacher-student relationships in different ways. Harbord (1992) emphasises that good group dynamics may be achieved using L2 strategies and adjustments, and that there is no need to use the L1 (p. 354). He views L2 as facilitative for strengthening these relations when used to tell jokes, chat informally, or when the teachers present personal information about themselves. He adds: "(…) when many effective L2 strategies are available to the teacher, the advantages of L1 use for this purpose would seem to be outweighed by the potential dangers" (Harbord, 1992, p. 354). Polio and Duff (1994) agree, and point to the fact the students may be less exposed for real life social situations, and one of the results may thereof be communication breakdown in situations where the students cannot discern whether the situation is a model for practice or a "real" situation (p. 322).

To explain grammar to the students: In situations of explaining grammar, the argument of authenticity is again emphasized. Polio and Duff (1994) explain:

> *By covering more material through the use of English [the L1], the students consequently miss useful opportunities to process communicative L2 input, to practice new L2 structures thoroughly in nonmechanical ways, and also to express and solve problems in the L2.* (p. 322).

Harbord (1992) also supports that explanations of grammar ideally should be conducted in the L2, and explains how the teachers who express grammar explanations in the L2 as "too complicated" as a consequence of:

> *Inadequate training in alternative L2 strategies, (...) having prepared in advance, the teacher should be able to communicate the meaning of a structure unambiguously without recourse to the mother tongue [the L1].* (p. 353).

Teachers should according to him be able to use alternative L2 strategies, also for grammar explanations.

To convey meaning: Again, it is claimed that the authenticity of a foreign atmosphere in a classroom will disappear with the use of L1. Harbord (1992) explains that students will pick up situations where the teacher alternates between the L1 and the L2, for example in checking meaning. He implies that it is a difficult task for the teachers to know whether the advantages to be gained from using the L1 outweigh the disadvantages of the loss of this authentic transaction (p. 352).

Summary

The supporting arguments from the L2 proponents' perspective are based on the importance of authentic foreign language use, and the teachers' ability to adjust their L2 according to expectations and according to their students' proficiency levels. The quantity of exposure is also considered important in order to expose the students to as much L2 as possible during teaching. It is also mentioned that the teacher may be too quick in the assessment of their students' comprehension before translating, and that they thereof might underestimate their students' comprehension level. There seems to be a general consensus that the use of L1 is not a device to be used to save time for more "useful" activities, nor to make life easier for the teacher *or* the students. In relation to the concept of comprehensible input it is emphasised that an integral part of language learning is trying to figure out what the teachers are saying.

2.6 Teacher-centred factors relating to L1 use

Based on the preceding literature framework, and its related research, certain factors that can be related to the teachers' L1 use in the classroom are found. These may, in combination, be predictive of the teachers' use of Norwegian in an EFL context. The following section will account for these factors; more specifically the teachers' proficiency and competence level, their L1/L2 awareness and attitude, their perception of their students' level, and not the least their ability to adjust their L2 in EFL teaching. It must be mentioned that none of these factors isolated can predict any L1 use, and that they all interact in the prediction of the teachers' use of L1 in relation to quantity and purpose.

2.6.1 What factors can affect the teachers' L1 use?

Awareness of L1/L2 use, or lack of awareness, is as mentioned connected to the teachers' L1 use in the EFL classroom. One of Levine's (2011) premises for L1's productive and useful role is that the language teachers "can and should be aware of, reflect critically on, and in some ways, explicitly manage the ways in which the L1 and L2 are used in the classroom" (p. 9). This implies that a critical and conscious awareness of L1 use is vital in order for the teachers to be able to adjust their L1 rightfully. Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) extend the argumentation: "The native language [the L1] must be used systematically, selectively and in judicious doses, and never in the inconsiderate, lazy and time-consuming way it is so often employed today by disaffected teachers" (p. 86). It appears that it is important to recognise that allowing the teachers to use the L1 in their EFL classes may involve less awareness of L1 use, which thereupon may lead to inappropriate use of the L1. Indeed, the teachers' awareness of their L1/L2 use may consequently prevent inappropriate use, as shown in Polio and Duff's study (1994) where it is illustrated that the teachers' lack of awareness "led to inconsistencies", and that the teachers appear to be unaware as to "how, when, and the extent" to which they use the L1 in the classroom (Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 320). Their inconsistent use of L1 can also be associated with their abilities to adjust their L2 and to their own proficiency level.

Theorists specifically point to the teachers' proficiency level and competence as relevant in order to know when and how to use the L1 in the appropriate situations (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Hellekjær, 2001). Hellekjær (2001) specifically denotes the importance of teacher competence in relation to the "the ability to teach in English with a degree of fluency and accuracy adequate to let the teacher function as a linguistic 'role model', and to feel comfortable when using the language (…)" (p. 192). In other words, to use the L2 appropriately requires an adequate level of teacher competence and proficiency. This subsequently implies that the teachers should have a repertoire of alternative L2 strategies for handling situations where it is possible to use the L2 to facilitate learning. Again, Polio and Duff's (1994) study illustrate that use of the L1 may be caused by lack of competence in terms of "necessary experience or strategies to rephrase or otherwise modify their speech" (Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 323). This may affect the students because it offers little incentive for the students to initiate meaningful interaction in the L2 themselves, since that behaviour is not being modelled for them by the teachers, as previously mentioned (Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 323). The inadequate training in L2 strategies in also suggested as a

predictive factor of inappropriate L1 use by Harbord (1992). It is obvious that the teachers' proficiency level and thereof ability to communicate in the L2 unambiguously can have an effect on how they use their L1 in the EFL classroom.

Underestimation of students may also be connected to the L1 use, although it is scarcely covered in FL literature. However, Wong-Fillmore (1985) argues that when the students do not understand the language of instruction, something "has to give", and that adjustments have to be made in the language being used (p. 37). She stresses that it is not an easy matter for the students to learn the language through which the information is conveyed, but that is possible and necessary, "as we have learned by observing lessons taught in successful classes" (p. 35). It is also implied in Grim's (2010) study that for example the teachers' spontaneous translations will deprive the students of the ability to show that they actually do comprehend what is being said, and the opportunity to learn inductively (p. 206). Grim explains these underestimations as triggered by fear of comprehension breakdown (Grim, 2010, p. 206). It is thereof implied that the teachers need to trust the process of language learning, and accept that non-comprehension, as a part of comprehensible input, can facilitate language learning.

In combination, all these four factors may contribute to explain the L1 use seen in the EFL classrooms. Although, several indications and connections have been found, no linear relationship between these factors have yet been established.

2.7 Chapter summary

The theoretical framework starts with a description of the process of language learning, second language acquisition and educational goals such as communicative competence. I then account for input and output in language learning. Theorists agree that input is essential for language learning, regardless of what form the input takes. Combined with the significant amounts of teacher talk this forms the foundation of the teachers' prominent role. This thereby implies that the teachers' choice of language of communication in EFL instruction is important for the learning process.

The umbrella term scaffolding tool is also presented, in which the L1 is viewed as a cognitive tool that benefits the students' learning process. It is also assumed that the quantity and purpose of L1 use will change, and/or possibly decrease, as the proficiency of the students develops. Since there is little research in this area, one of the aims of this master

thesis is to explore this area and to compare the quantity of use, as well as the L1's functions at the lower secondary school level with higher levels.

To highlight and examine these questions the two different approaches to what is best for language acquisition is then presented. The two views differ greatly in what is considered beneficial and detrimental for the language acquisition. The L1 proponents typically argue that judicious use of L1 in the EFL classroom is based on factors such as student comprehension, teacher efficiency, authoritative role modelling and creating teacher-student relationships. The L2 proponents support maximising the use of L2, and their supportive arguments are primarily related to quantity of exposure, authenticity and the need to learn how to handle communication breakdowns. Nonetheless, both approaches desire an *optimal* use of the L1, even though they differ in their conceptualisation of optimal.

Overall, the research findings show contradictory results concerning both quantitative use and functions of the L1, and only a few studies have previously investigated the functions of L1 and compared them between lower and higher levels in the educational system. As has been stated, no linear relationship between quantity of L1 use and students' proficiency level has yet been established, even though some connections have been found between the functions of L1 and the level of the students' proficiency.

The chapter concludes with an elaboration on different factors that can predict the L1 use in the classroom, which are the teachers' proficiency and competence, their L1/L2 awareness, the perception of their students' comprehension and proficiency level, and their ability to adjust L2 use and level in teaching.

3 Methodology

For the present study I chose to observe six different teachers in six different schools, three at the 8th grade and three at the VG3 level. I then interviewed the teachers after the observations. In the following an overview of the methods used in this study will be provided. Towards the end of the chapter, the study's validity, reliability and transferability are commented upon.

The first half of this chapter is structured according to what Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010) refer to as the seven stages in the research process. These are:

1. Selecting a problem
2. Reviewing the literature on the problem
3. Designing the research
4. Collecting the data
5. Analysing the data
6. Interpreting the findings and stating conclusions
7. Reporting results

In each of the corresponding sections below, I first provide a brief presentation of each stage and then give an account of the procedures involved for this master thesis.

3.1 Selecting a problem

The first step in the research process involves expressing the topic for investigation in the form of a research question, which will provide the framework for the researcher's work. This question should be significant enough to warrant investigation, and the answer to the problem should not already be available (Ary et al., 2010, p. 31). The research question and the process through which the theme of this study was chosen were accounted for in chapter 1. I had also previously carried out a pilot study on this topic in 2012, which was a part of the preparation for this master thesis, and this pilot paved the way for this thesis' research question (Hoff, 2012).

3.2 Reviewing the literature

I conducted searches for relevant books, articles, dissertations and theses before and during the entire process in order to develop knowledge and insight into the topic. The relevant literature is reviewed in chapter 2.

3.3 Research design

The investigator next plans how to conduct research to answer the research question; this plan includes the methods to be used, what data is to be gathered, where, how, and from whom (Ary et al., 2010, p. 32). Ary et al. (2010) write that for qualitative design the design is flexible and may change during the investigation if appropriate (p. 32). An account of how the methods were designed for this study will be presented in the following sections, in which these issues will be addressed.

3.3.1 The choice of data

I decided that I wanted to observe the teachers first-hand to see how the L1 was used in EFL instruction. I wanted to investigate the L1 both with regard to quantity of use, and for the situations it was used in. Interviews of these teachers, after the observations, were also implemented. These interviews were to check whether the teachers' perceived L1 use was in accordance with what was seen in the observations. In addition, their underlying attitudes elicited in the interviews could also contribute to explain the observations. Since I wanted to compare the quantity and purposes of L1 use at low and high student proficiency levels, I decided to compare the lowest level of lower secondary with the highest level of upper secondary, which in practice means 8th grade and VG3.

3.3.2 Methods

My data was collected through a combination of qualitative classroom observation and semi-structured post-interviews. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which a particular behaviour(s) was present (Ary et al., 2010, p. 216), i. e. the extent of L1 use and the L1's different functions. The structured observation that was performed is by Kleven, Hjardemaal and Tveit (2011) explained as observations where the purpose is to register different behaviours that unfold in the classroom, and is managed with predefined categories that are used during the observation (p. 41). Several of Ary et al.'s (2010) preliminary steps

for preparing this type of direct observation were followed, such as selection of the aspect of behaviour to be observed, clearly defining the behaviours falling within a chosen category, and developing specific procedures for recording the behaviour (p. 217).

The format of semi-structured interviews performed after the observations were considered suitable for the purpose of the present study. To conduct the interviews after the observations would strengthen the findings through triangulation (see section 3.9), and would also compensate for biases during the teaching (see section 3.8 and 3.9). The questions for the interviews are designed to reveal what is important to understand about the teachers' use of L1, and allow sufficient flexibility in order to pursue relevant aspects and information (Ary et al., 2010, p. 438). I decided to conduct the interviews immediately after their teaching, wherever it was possible, in order for the information about the respondents' teaching to be fresh.

3.3.3 Developing the observation categories

In order to analyse the observations a coding system with observation categories was developed, which selected the aspect of behaviour to be observed. Since similar observations of similar behaviour have been conducted in previous research, this thesis' categories are mostly based on a combination of some previous studies' categories (e.g. Duff & Polio, 1990; Polio & Duff, 1994; Grim, 2010). However, they are adjusted throughout the process according to this thesis research statement, and according to the findings from the observations. The categories were thereafter placed in a form that were used during the observation, and in the analysing process. The forms that were used during the observations comprised two sub-forms. The first contained a description of the categories that were developed, as described below. It also comprised an empty form in which time, description of the situation and context, and an initial coding could be registered. The description of the observation categories can be found in Appendix 2. The initial categories that were used during the observations were, as mentioned, changed somewhat during the process as a consequence of adjusting to the relevant findings. This is nonetheless not relevant for the results, and the final edition of the categories is used in the following descriptions and discussions.

The categories, that are greatly inspired by Duff and Polio (1990), Polio and Duff (1994) and Grim (2010), are divided into five main categories. They are operationalized as follows:

1. *Translation (both immediate and delayed)*: the teacher uses the L1 to give the translation of a word or expression, without asking the students for the meaning or taking the time to check students' comprehension. In the case of delayed translation the translation is for example prompted by questions from one of the students. This category mostly conforms to plain translations, particularly to single-words, with and without equivalents in the L2. Whole utterances can also be coded as translations, when the purpose of the L1 is the translation itself.

2. *Discipline (classroom management)*: for teacher maintenance of discipline; the teacher uses the L1 to deal with lack of concentration, noise, talk, misconduct, etc.

3. *Task instruction (classroom management):* the teacher uses the L1 to give instructions for an activity or a task.

4. *Solidarity*: the teacher uses the L1 in a sense of closeness with students either to show understanding or to create a friendly support. Chatting with the students as a whole or with groups and individuals is also registered as solidarity.

5. *Grammar explanation*: the teacher uses the L1 to help explain grammar.

6. *To convey meaning*: the teacher uses the L1 to convey meaning of e.g. a new topic. This function can be motivated by a belief that the students would not understand, or motivated by a student's question. This also includes the teacher's checking of comprehension. This category is also defined more loosely than the others, and situations that are not appropriate for any of the other categories often fall into this category.

In some situations the teachers' utterances could be interpreted as two different situations; the most relevant situation is then chosen, and the situations are never coded as more than one. This will be described more thoroughly in section 3.8.

3.3.4 Developing the interview guide

Next, the interview guide was developed together with the supervisor. Duff and Polio's (1990) interview guide was of inspiration for the process since their study also included direct observation followed by interviews. The interview guide was organized thematically and with open-ended questions; enabling a controlled, but not too rigid interview between the informants and the interviewer. The interview guide will be accounted for in section 3.4.2 below, and can be found in Appendix 1.

3.3.5 Sampling of informants

Six different informants were chosen for the purpose of the study. Since I wanted to compare low levels of proficiency with high levels, a sample comprising three teachers from the 8th grade and three from the VG3 level was chosen. I considered choosing the VG1 level at upper secondary since this is the highest level of compulsory English. After some discussion with my supervisor, I decided to not to change since the VG3 course, although an elective subject, is the highest level of English in upper secondary. After all this would allow me to compare classes at quite different levels of proficiency.

The procedure that was followed for the sampling were simply sending an information letter to all the VG3 schools in the Oslo area, in addition to some upper secondary schools where I had contacts. For the 8th grade, the letter was sent to approximately 30 different schools; distributed all over the city of Oslo. The schools that were used for the sample were the first schools that answered, and after a span of several weeks all the schools were chosen.

The information letter included information of the criteria for the teaching. These criteria included 1) the teachers all taught English as one of their main subjects; 2) all lessons were based on "lecturing", where the teacher introduced a topic and was the main communicator; 3) all lessons included some sort of dialogue in terms of group work and discussions in plenary; 4) none of the teachers were informed about what they were observed for; 5) all schools, teachers, and students were assured full anonymity.

Four of the informants were from schools in Oslo, while one was from Akershus county, and the last from Oppland county. The six schools did vary in relation to socio-economical conditions and locations. Three of the schools were highly multi-cultural and placed in eastern parts of Oslo county; namely school A (upper secondary, Carrie's school), D (Kate's school), and F (both lower secondary, Liza's school).

To enable a proper comparison it was important that the numbers of informants were equally distributed between 8th grade and VG3. It was also important that the lessons observed were as similar as possible. Based on the pilot study and previous knowledge, a selection process based on ease of access and my thesis's requirements was therefore prioritized due to the limited time of scope. The sample used for this study is therefore a combination of purposive sample and a convenience sample. Ary et al. (2010) describes a purposive sample as a sample of participants that is believed to provide the relevant information, and claims that a purposive sample is sufficient to provide insight and understanding (p. 429). Due to the time limitations and the prioritisation of the size of the sample, the purposive sample was also combined with a convenience sample. Ary et al. (2010) explain that this is "choosing a sample based on availability, time, location, and ease of access "(p. 431).

3.4 Collecting the data

Initially, the observations and its procedure will be accounted for. Thereafter, a brief description of the informants will follow before the interviews and interview guide will be presented.

3.4.1 The observations

Before my school visit, all teachers were informed that they were going to be observed for a topic that had something to do with *communication*, and that the teacher was the main focus. This was done to obtain validity and authenticity for the observations. They were also informed that the students were to be anonymised and were not very relevant for the observation, also to assure an authentic setting. The authenticity contributes to the representativeness of the observations.

The observations were conducted according to the convenience of the teacher's schedule. Class enrolments ranged from approximately eight to 30 students. All observations were audio-recorded from the beginning of the lesson until the last student left the classroom.

I met the teacher some minutes in advance, and introduced myself, the procedure for the observation and the follow-up interview. Any questions regarding for example anonymity and tape-recording were answered. Next, I was placed discreetly at the back of the classroom. I experienced some non-authenticity in the few first minutes of the lesson, in form of the

students and teacher being very conscious of my presence and showing unnatural behaviour, but for all the classes it appeared that I was quickly forgotten.

During the observations L1 situations that appeared during the teaching were coded according to the observation categories mentioned in 3.3.3; this was done to contribute to ease the process of analysing the material after the observations and interviews were conducted. It was also a significant part of preparing the interview, since one of the goals was to "confront" the teachers with their instances of L1 use. However, it was difficult to code some of the situations that appeared during the observations, and in some of the situations I was not able to code them correctly as they occurred. This had some implications for the interview, which is described more thoroughly in the section below, and in section 3.8 and 3.9 of validity and reliability.

3.4.2 The follow-up interviews

As mentioned, the interviews were conducted immediately after the observations, except for one of the schools where one of the teachers had some other lessons and the interview was conducted a few hours later. The interviews took place in their offices, and were also audio-recorded. The teachers were presented with the thesis' topic before the interview started, and they knew what they had been observed for at this point.

During the interviews the interview guide was used as a template, but the structure of the interviews varied somewhat from teacher to teacher. During the interviews I found it necessary to notify the informants that I was not there to judge either their teaching nor their attitudes towards L1/L2 use. They were informed that I simply wanted to know their attitudes towards use of the L1, in addition to their explanations of their L1 use seen from the observations. This was done to avoid bias in which the informants could be changing their behaviour and answers in order to fulfil the perceived requirements of the research.

All the interviews were conducted in Norwegian. The interviews were as mentioned audio-recorded, but I also took notes during the interviews to ease the analysis of the findings. The teachers were initially asked for their background, as for their seniority, their education and if they had any international experience. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

The structure of the interview guide was clustered around five main themes, with a varying number of questions for each of the categories. The categories were philosophy of

teaching, teacher background (the teachers' evaluation of themselves), perception of their students' proficiency level, departmental policy, and educational preparation.

The first group of questions in *philosophy of teaching* was related to different aspects concerning the teachers' attitudes towards teaching. Among these, the teachers were asked about their goals for their students and the methods they used to achieve these goals. The teachers' opinion about the use of L1 in foreign language teaching was also of interest. They were asked in general of their opinions of L1 use with regard to quantity and functions, and they were also asked about what situations they considered L1 use appropriate and inappropriate. Some of these questions are a part of the triangulation, which is accounted for in section 3.10.

In the next group of questions, *teacher background*, they were asked to evaluate their own proficiency level in English, as well as how comfortable they feel during their own EFL teaching.

The category of questions concerning the *perception of their students' proficiency*, included questions concerning how well the teachers felt that their students understood them during the lessons. They were also asked if they adjusted themselves according to the perceived comprehension level of the students.

As for the category of *departmental policy*, all the teachers were asked if they had any local or central guidelines to follow regarding the use of L1 in EFL instruction. They were also asked if any of their colleagues had any different teaching mentalities, especially regarding the use of Norwegian in English lessons. In addition they were also asked if they thought they could do any changes for their own teaching according to the competence aims of LK06. The last questions in this category regarded the new curriculum that was up for consultation, the autumn 2012. In short, this curriculum emphasises oral teaching to a larger extent than the previous curriculum. The teachers were asked of their initial thoughts concerning the new curriculum, and if they imagined this leading to any changes in the classroom. Both the subject curricula and the consultation document were available for the teachers during the interviews, and they were offered the opportunity to look at these if desired.

The last category regarded the teachers' *educational preparation*, in which they were asked if they were satisfied with their education or not. Finally, they were asked if they had any additional information they wanted to add and comment upon.

Since I was not able to code all of the L1 situations correctly during the observations, some of the questions I desired to ask were not discovered before after the interviews. A few of the teachers were contacted by e-mail with the transcribed situations and a short explanation of the context, in order to try to get some relevant answers to some of the unanswered questions. This was not optimal, but the answers are hopefully, still reasonably valid. This will be discussed further in section 3.8.

3.4.3 The informants

There were as mentioned six informants; five female teachers, and one male. To ensure the anonymity of the teachers, they have been assigned aliases; Carrie, Susan, and Ben from the upper secondary level, and Kate, Anna, and Liza from lower secondary level. Section 3.3.5 also provides information regarding the selection of these teachers.

The six different teachers who participated in this study are between 36 and 56 years old, and their amount of experience as teachers of English varied from two to sixteen years. The teachers for upper secondary level all teach Social Studies English at VG3 level. Susan had taught English for 17 years and Ben for 8 years. Carrie is native Australian, has lived in Norway for nine, and taught English for four years in Norway. None of these teachers had ever taught English at the lower secondary level. Among these three teachers, one of them had a bachelor's degree and additional courses, one of them a master's degree with additional courses and the third teacher two master's degrees with additional courses. The native speaker teacher was born and raised in Australia, and also had her education from there. The two other teachers have both stayed abroad in English speaking countries for a longer period of time. Carrie, the native Australian, was initially assigned to the project before I realised that she was a native speaker. Due to the difficulties of getting enough informants, she was kept as an informant. The only factor that would separate her from the other informants was her level of competence in English; this was not assessed as decisive for the findings, rather as an interesting twist to the project, from which interesting information could possibly surface.

The teachers' experiences from the lower secondary level varied from two to 11 years of teaching. Neither of these teachers had taught at the upper secondary level. This year they were all teaching the 8th grade at their lower secondary schools. The informants' educations vary from foundation course in English with additional courses, a bachelor's degree, to a

master's degree in English. Both Kate and Anna had lived in an English speaking country for a longer period of time.

Moreover, all of the informants have studied English as a subject and have completed the required practical teacher training courses. All of them have also received parts of their higher education at the University of Oslo, except Carrie and Ben.

3.5 Analysing the data

The analysis of the data started after all the observations and interviews had been conducted. The analysing process for both the observations and interviews will be accounted for in the next two sections.

3.5.1 Analysing the observations

All the observations were audio-recorded. Notes were also taken during the observation process, which were useful for the subsequent analysis. For the examination of the findings from the observations both the audio-recordings and the notes taken during the observations were used. The original plan was to transcribe all the L1 situations that appeared during the lessons observed, with their accompanying context. This was done for five of the six lessons. The procedure for the sixth lesson was somewhat different due to the large amounts of L1 use in the lesson. As the estimation of L1 use shows in *Table 4.4* (in chapter 4), Liza's lesson comprised 79 different L1 situations, corresponding to 46 per cent of the 90 minutes lesson. Due to the limited time of scope, and its relevance, approximately 30 per cent of the situations were transcribed. One of the main priorities in the analysing process was to show a representative picture of the lesson observed. This priority is attempted met by thoroughly covering all the different categories represented during Liza's observation. For the remaining non-transcribed situations, a fixed procedure was followed: The entire recordings from the lesson were carefully listened through. For each L1 situation that occurred it was listened through once more, the situation was coded according to the observation categories, registered in a form, with the appropriate category, number of words used in the situations, and a mark showing where it could be found on the tape. The disadvantages of this procedure are elaborated on in section 3.8 below.

As for the transcribed situations, the recordings were carefully listened through, and the notes taken during the observation were used as an indication of where and what kind of situations that could be expected from the recordings. For every L1 situation that appeared,

the context and the relevant situations were transcribed. In this process the different situations that appeared were categorized and inserted into different tables. The main goal of the observations was to establish the quantity and the different uses of L1, so the L1 situations were therefore categorized according to the coding scheme presented in 3.3.3. The context for each situation was also described, and all the L1 words used were counted for each situation. In some of the situations it was not possible to count all the words due to for instance poor sound quality. This may affect the amounts of words actually counted, but since this was on equal terms for all the teachers and lessons, this was not expected to affect the results significantly. The total amounts of words in the lessons were not counted, i.e. the English words used, simply due to limitations of time. An estimation of the total amount of words used during a typical lesson is made based on Grim's (2010) observations from 14 different lessons observed in his study, as seen in for example *Table 4.1* in chapter 4.

Many of the situations proved challenging to interpret and to categorize. This was due to either poor sound quality, i.e. whispering, noise in the classroom, or the content itself. These situations were therefore played multiple times, and analysed thoroughly. This process is more thoroughly accounted for in section 3.8 and 3.9 below.

When all the lessons were listened thoroughly through, and all the L1 situations were categorized and coded, all the results were inserted into tables in order to compare the different teachers. These tables are presented in chapter 4. Numbers of L1 situations, word counts, percentages of L1 use, and L1 functions for each of the teachers and for each of the levels are among functions that are presented in these tables. These tables enable the opportunity to study the teachers individually, the teachers at their level of teaching, and it enables the comparison between 8th grade and VG3 on many aspects.

3.5.2 Analysing the interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state that the content and goal of a study determine how you analyse your material (p. 199). My material comprised a combination of transcribing the material, combined with notes taken during the interviews, in addition to extensive notes taken during the analysing process. These extensive notes were then combined into a simple document where the content of each interview was rendered. As mentioned, due to the amounts of data collected and the limited time of scope, the entire interviews were not fully transcribed. I am convinced that the extensive notes are satisfactory for the analysis, even though I would have preferred to transcribe all of the interviews in their entirety.

Before analysing the audio-recorded interviews a set of common guidelines were made for the analysing procedure, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) recommends. According to these authors, how the qualitative material is to be analysed depends on what purpose the interview has. Since the interview guide and interview were structured thematically, the notes were structured likewise. For this study, the differences of the teachers internally and the comparison of the different levels of schools were of interest in order to examine the research question. The thematisation of the interviews would then ease the process of comparison. The categories from section 3.3.3 were therefore used.

The collected data was then analysed one topic at a time, starting with the VG3 level, since the findings from these three teachers were more uniform than at the lower secondary level. I then familiarised myself with the extensive notes from each informant, before the selection of the most central utterances were done in relation to each theme and analysed these for the result section. When the analysis for all the categories for VG3 was finished, I followed the same procedure for 8th grade.

3.6 Interpreting the findings and stating conclusions

In qualitative research the researcher now typically presents their interpretations and explanations, in which can be seen in the results and analysis in chapter 4 and in the discussion in chapter 5.

3.7 Reporting results

Researchers must also make their procedures, findings, and conclusions available in a form intelligible to others (Ary et al., 2010, p. 32). The methodology is accounted for in the current chapter, and additional information will be found in the Appendices. Only information of relevance is of course used in this thesis, i.e. there is information from the interviews and the observation that has not been included.

3.8 Reliability

Reliability relates to potential random errors, and is "concerned with how consistently you are measuring whatever you are measuring" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 239). The reliability of both the observations and interviews will be assessed in the following.

Ary et al. (2010) suggest that there are two ways of enhancing the reliability of direct observations. The first approach is to have two independent observers where the interobserserver reliability is determined after the observation; i. e. the different findings from the same observation are compared and correlated (p. 256). The other approach is where the observers are extensively trained "so that they are competent in knowing how to observe and how to record the observations" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 220).

Since the resources for this master thesis is very limited there was only one researcher present during the observations. I was not "extensively trained" either, but in consultations with my supervisor, combined with large amounts of literature, I was as prepared as well as I could be for these observations at the time with my limited experience.

The reliability can also be affected by the *observer effect*, which occurs "when people being observed behave differently just because they are being observed" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 219). This was the main reason why the interviews were conducted after the observations. It was very important for this thesis' findings that the informants were observed before the interviews, and that they did not know what they were being observed for. If they knew that they were being observed for how much and how they used the L1, the probability is high that they would be more conscious about their L1 use; which again would have affected the results significantly.

Ary et al. (2010) also claim that, the subjects being observed will most often, after an initial reaction, adjust to their normal behaviour again, especially if the researcher operates unobtrusively (p. 219). As mentioned in section 3.4.1, this is exactly what happened during many of my observations. However, the teacher and the students quickly adapted to their authentic behaviour after a short period of time while I was observing.

With hindsight, it is obvious that the coding process featured some challenges that might have affected the reliability negatively. The assessment and coding of the L1 situations is a subjective process, and subject assessments are subject for misinterpretations. However, the vast majority of L1 situations were characteristic for the different observation categories, and therefore easy to code. Some of the L1 situations featured challenges in relation to coding them correctly, and the measurements that were taken to ease the coding process did not seem sufficient. The measures that were taken to enhance the reliability of the coding process were the well-developed forms with the separate characteristics of each of the different categories as mentioned in section 3.3.3 above. Also, the conditions in which the observations were conducted were similar of character, as seen in section 3.4.1 above. And, as described in section 3.5.1, the analysis was uniform for the different teachers' lessons.

Regardless of this, some of the situations were difficult to code. The category of translation was particularly difficult to grasp for Liza's lesson because the translations appeared in large chunks. The diffuse L1 situations were initially coded by myself, but in order to obtain a greater assurance in my assessment, I performed a reliability-check on a few of these examples with my co-students. These reliability-checks generally agreed with my coding, but some examples showed discrepancies. In the cases of discrepancy, I made a new assessment and finally set a category for these examples. Also, the remaining 54 of the L1 situations from Liza's lesson should preferably have been transcribed in order to strengthen the consistency of the coding. But as mentioned, the vast majority of the situations were not difficult to code, so the margin of error should be minor. It would of course have been preferable to have had two researchers coding the same situations for better reliability.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define reliability of qualitative interviews as related to the "consistency and credibility" of the findings (p. 250, my translation). They also first and foremost relate the reliability to the quality of the interview and to the analysing process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 174, 208). The reliability of my interviews will be discussed in relation to these areas.

Consistent and neutral questions are important to enhance reliability (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In order to obtain copious and representative information from the informants, it was attempted to use questions of this format. Indeed, the semi-structured interviews are structured, but also open up for free communication. Furthermore, the informants were interviewed with the same interview guide with the same wording of the questions. The same questions were asked to all of the informants, and mainly in the same order. In some of the interviews, other natural orders of the topics listed appeared than the one in the interview guide. The authenticity of the conversation was prioritised, rather than following the guide slavishly. This hopefully gave more sincere answers, and the reliability was hopefully retained in these situations.

To enhance the reliability the teachers were also provided the same information letter, and the same information of what they were observed for. All the teachers were also introduced for the thesis' topic before the interview started formally. All the interviews were conducted in the teachers' offices, relatively immediately after the observations.

The challenges in relation to the immediate coding during the observations had some following consequences for some of the interviews. Since some of the uses of L1 were miscoded during the lesson, and since there was not adequate time to examine the findings

between the observation and interview – I thus lost the opportunity to confront some of the teachers directly with some of their specific L1 uses. This was later dealt with during the analyses, and the current teachers were contacted by e-mail describing the relevant situations. Seen in relation to the discussion, I do not think this will affect the overall results.

All the interviews followed the same procedure in the analysis. The thematic interview guide may have enhanced the reliability, since this eased the categorisation of the different utterances in the analyses. As mentioned, it would have been preferable to transcribe all the material, but this was not possible due to the time limitations combined with the amounts of data collected.

3.9 Validity

According to Ary et al. (2010) validity is "the most important consideration in developing and evaluating measuring instruments" (p. 225). There are several definitions of the concept validity; one of the most common definitions is simple: "Validity of a measure is defined as to which extent it [a procedure/test] measures what you intent to measure" (Bordens & Abbott, 2005, p. 127).

There is according to Ary et al. (2010) particularly one source of bias that affects the validity of direct observations; namely *observer bias* (p. 219). The observer bias occurs when the researcher's own perceptions, beliefs, and biases influence the interpretations of the behaviour that is seen during the observation and can result in an inaccurate picture of the observations (Ary et al., 2010, p. 219, 434). The authors suggest that having more than one observer may reduce this effect, but since this was not possible in this research project other measurements were used. The most common strategy to control for bias in qualitative studies is *reflexivity*; "which is the use of self-reflection to recognize one's own biases and actively seek them out" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 501). In order to avoid observer bias, I was very conscious not to integrate my own opinions in the observations. A journal was also kept during the process as Ary et al. (2010) recommend. The observation categories were also clearly defined with precise description of what behaviour belonged under the specific categories. Furthermore, these observation categories were actively used during the analysing process. As mentioned, some of the situations were difficult to interpret despite the well-developed categories. All the L1 situations, and particularly these, may have been affected by my personal opinion, even though it was controlled to the largest extent possible, and reliability-checks were also used in addition.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), the most practical way of achieving greater validity is to minimise the amount of bias as much as possible: "The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent, and the substantive content of the questions" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 150). With regard to the characteristics of the interviewer, reflexivity, as explained above, was also used as a means to control bias in the interview process. Next, having a representative sample can help to control the characteristics of the respondent. A more valid sampling procedure could have been chosen for this study if there was more time, in order to ensure a more representative sample. Accordingly, the schools could have been more representative with regard to factors such as socio-economic conditions. This might have affected the findings, but since there are differences between the informants' schools in this sample, it will probably not be of significant importance.

The informants themselves represent different kinds of experiences and backgrounds; indeed, a quite representative sample of teachers. They may nonetheless have provided inaccurate information for different reasons, but I have endeavoured to avoid these biases through the interview guide, the setting, the information, and the consistency in these procedures.

It must also be emphasised again, that this master thesis' aim is not to establish causal relationship between the different factors that are investigated and the use of L1. This would be a large problem with regard to the internal validity, which refers to the inferences about whether the changes observed, is caused by particular factors (Ary et al., 2010, p. 272). The objective of this thesis is to obtain a better understanding of the factors that possibly influence the teachers' use of L1.

I have in this thesis attempted to increase the validity of the findings through *triangulation*. Ary et al. (2010) defines the concept of triangulation as "confirming data by using multiple data-gathering procedures, multiple sources of data or multiple observers" (p. 652). As an attempt to strengthen the validity, and to compensate for different biases, I performed the interview after the observations. The quantity and quality of the L1 uses seen from the observations will be controlled by the teachers' views in the interviews. The findings are therefore confirmed by using multiple sources of data. Moreover, these two methods complement each other, and their supplying findings are essential for the results, analysis and discussion.

3.10 Transferability

Transferability is "the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied or generalized to other contexts or to other groups" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 501). The transferability of a set of findings to another context depends on the similarity between the context of study and other contexts (Ary et al., 2010, p. 501). There are several factors that can be considered as threats to the transferability of this study. First and foremost, the sample comprises only six informants, which in itself limits the transferability significantly. In addition, and as mentioned, the sample was also a combination of convenience and purposive sample, which is not optimal for any research. All these factors have been thoroughly assessed in the process, and have continuously been attempted counteracted. This study will nevertheless only be valid for this sample, and it cannot be generalised to a larger context nor predict with any certainty the purposes for which a given teacher elsewhere will use the L1 rather than the L2.

However, supporting research studies can contribute to strengthen the transferability of this study. It is important to clarify that there are some difficulties concerning direct comparisons to other studies, because the majority of the studies that have been conducted in FL classrooms studying a foreign language that in many cases are not comparable to the role English has in a Norwegian context, as mentioned in the introduction. Accordingly, this is taken into account in the comparison.

3.11 Chapter summary

The present study is a combination of qualitative direct observations and semi-structured interviews of six different informants equally distributed between lower secondary and upper secondary school levels. The informants are distributed in different socio-economic areas in Oslo, Akershus and Oppland county, and the informants' background and experiences show a representative variation. The findings were after the research thoroughly analysed before the 8th grade teachers and VG3 teachers were studied individually and according to their teaching level with regard to their differences and similarities in quantity and quality of L1 use.

I have also commented on the study's reliability, validity and transferability. Although I have attempted to account for threats to the study's reliability and validity throughout the process, the extent to which the findings can be generalised to other FL teachers, and their quantity and quality of L1 use, will mainly depend on their similarities

with the informants and context on which this study is based on, not to mention if they are confirmed by other studies.

The next chapter, the results and analysis, will now elaborate on the specific findings that were found in the observations and interviews.

4 Results and analysis

In this chapter the results and analysis of the different findings from the interviews and observations of six different teachers are presented, starting with the three teachers from upper secondary level, focusing on quantity of their L1 use, and which situations the L1 is used in. This is followed by the presentation of the three teachers from lower secondary level. Thereafter, the two levels are contrasted in order to investigate what findings the comparison has yielded, thereby contributing to explain the variation in L1 use.

4.1 Upper secondary level

This section starts with the VG3 teachers' views from the interviews, and is followed by the presentation of the study's findings from the observations.

4.1.1 The teachers' views – the interviews

In the interviews, several factors that are related to the teachers' L1 use are discussed, such as teacher proficiency level, the students' level of comprehension, the teacher's attitude in relation to L1 use, and the teachers' adjustments of the L2.

Why the teachers may have different methodologies in EFL teaching

As pointed out in the introduction chapter, the LK06 does not specify a preferred language of communication for English teaching, which leaves the choice of language in EFL teaching to the teachers' discretion. It also became clear during the interviews that the departmental policy at the local school levels also open up for methodological independency, which means that the teachers' teaching methods are a result of their personal attitudes and reflections, also with regard to the use of L1 and L2.

In general, all three of the upper secondary level teachers appear to have made very deliberate decisions as to what language they use in their teaching. These teachers support a view of keeping L1 use to an absolute minimum. Indeed, statements from the interviews such as "I teach English, not Norwegian" and "It is *English* that is on the timetable!" capture the VG3 teachers' opinions about the language of communication quite well. Both Susan and Ben claim to be quite rigid in their attitude of L1 use, while Carrie also supports this view to a large extent. They consider consistent L2 use and proper amounts of L2 crucial for optimal language learning. Susan says: "In order to raise the awareness with the students, the teacher

needs to use the language often and to a large extent, and be aware of how he or she uses the language." Due to the high requirements of language skills and recognition at the VG3 level, the teachers are of the opinion that students will be deprived of beneficial comprehensible input if they choose to use the L1 instead of the L2.

How the teachers handle students' lack of comprehension

During the interviews the teachers were also asked to evaluate themselves in terms of their own proficiency, competence, and confidence, because their self-perception, in addition to their actual level of proficiency, can affect their teaching in the EFL classroom. They all assess their level as more than adequate. Susan perceives herself as very competent and confident, and is as comfortable teaching in English as in Norwegian. Ben perceives himself as near native, and describes himself as being in a mind-set of the English language, and is therefore very comfortable in his own teaching. Carrie is native Australian and evaluates her competence as impeccable, but she also explains how there occasionally are situations in which she forgets some English terms.

All three teachers strive to use as much English as possible, yet they emphasise that the L2 cannot be used without the students' comprehension being taken into account. As Carrie says: "It is not about what I know, but what the students know". The perception of the students' comprehension and level of proficiency is one of the important factors they consider in relation to the use of L1 in a classroom situation. When the teachers were asked about their perceptions of their students' comprehension, the all replied that the level of comprehension is very high in their respective VG3 classes, and that situations where the students fail to understand rarely occur. Since it is beyond this thesis scope to assess the students' actual comprehension and proficiency, the foundation for this thesis will be the teachers' assessment of these factors, in addition to my subjective assessments from the observations.

However, when there are situations where the students fail to comprehend, all three teachers explain that they first attempt to adjust their L2 before resorting to the L1. They argue that they for example paraphrase, repeat utterances, simplify the language, or use additional tools like for example the blackboard. As one of the teachers states: "The more difficult the concepts are, the more simple the language has to be." They also stress that the students can ask the teachers about things they do not understand, or ask them to slow down. Ben emphasises that "I will always endeavour to use English, but I will simplify the language if it is too difficult. I will repeat in English, and use a simpler language". Susan also describes

how it is the teacher's job to make it clear to the students that it is not necessary to understand all the words used by the teacher, and that it is a part of the learning process to "struggle" to understand. According to Susan, the teachers can contribute to this by being consistent in their L2 use so the students naturally adjust to this over time.

When is L1 use okay?

It does not seem as there is a precarious need to use the L1 at this level, according to these teachers' opinions. However, *translation* is considered as one of the appropriate uses of L1. More specifically; explaining new concepts where there are no equivalents in Norwegian. Furthermore, *conveyance of meaning,* where there are differences in structures of the Norwegian and English society, e.g. the political system, is also considered as legitimate L1 use. Also mentioned was *task-instruction* where it is perceived that the students fail to comprehend important messages, although this rarely occurs at this level. *Grammatical explanations* where there are new concepts involved were also mentioned as legitimate use, or where it is necessary to offer an L1 "peg" to hang the matter on.

The teachers were also asked about what factors that possibly can cause inappropriate use of L1, in which their responses corresponded to a high degree. The factors they mentioned are when teachers underestimate the students' comprehension level, low teacher competence and low teacher awareness about the importance of L2 use. Of course the answers given by the teachers are simply speculations and beliefs, and are based on their own reasoning and experience.

With regard to the teacher's competence one of the teachers claim that situations where the teaching "goes off script", e.g. in situations with everyday chit-chatting or in disciplinary situations, are particularly challenging for many teachers. One of the teachers also mentions that inappropriate use can be a result of low confidence in own EFL teaching, relating to difficulties concerning the ability to adjust the L2 during their teaching.

Regarding the assumption that inappropriate use derives from underestimating the students' comprehension level, Susan says: "I am convinced that many teachers underestimate their students. I have often heard for example task instructions with students I myself have spoken English to in the same kind of situations, and it is simply not necessary." Furthermore, she adds that the teachers often are unaware of what they are doing:

> *I think that inappropriate use is a result of the teacher's bad habit most of the time. To obtain a good development of language the students need to learn to think in*

English, and not via Norwegian. If you then start using Norwegian it breaks the flow of the L2.

As noted above, all three teachers at the VG3 level appear very conscious of their L2 use, and are "stingy" regarding the L1. All these three teachers are of the opinion that they make themselves understood most of the time, to a large extent due to their own adjustments in relation to the simplicity of language and paraphrasing and so on. It is very reasonable to believe that they are able to easily adjust their L2 due to their own proficiency level and confidence in the L2. They also list some appropriate L1 uses, and consider factors as underestimation of students' comprehension level, and teacher's awareness and competence as factors that can affect whether the teachers appropriately choose to adjust their L1 use to their students' proficiency level.

4.1.2 The teachers' L1 use – the observations

The findings from the observations to a large extent concur with the teachers' opinions in the interviews; for example does the teachers' self-confessed L1 use to a high degree reflect the observed L1 use. In the following, the study's findings will present the quantity and the functions of the observed L1 use. These findings will further illustrate what differences there are in L1 use, and start the discussion on what explains these differences.

The setting

All observations from the three different schools at upper secondary level lasted approximately 90 minutes. All three EFL classes are Social Studies English, a subject in programmes for specialisation in general studies. This subject is an elective course and represents the highest level of English at upper secondary level.

All the three lessons had the same structure as the lessons in lower secondary that I present later. The lessons comprised a presentation of a new topic, in which the teacher introduced the respective topic, and was responsible for the majority of the communication performed in the lesson. Additional communicative situations such as in small group work and dialogues in plenary were also performed during these lessons, with small variations between the three different schools.

The quantity of L1 use

The observations from the three classes show that all three teachers are generally very consistent in their L2 use, and only a few L1 situations appeared during the observations overall. In fact, there were only eight situations (*see Table 4.1* below) in the three different lessons comprising 4.5 hours of teaching, and these situations had a registered number of approximately 42 words[1]. I can mention for comparison that one 90 minutes lecture has on average about 4075 words[2]. An overview of the L1 use is presented below.

Table 4.1
Overview L1 use: Upper secondary level
The number of L1 situations in each of the teachers' classroom is shown. It also shows the number of L1 words used for each L1 situation, which can be compared to the approximate number of words for one 90 minutes lesson. The approximate percentage of L1 use is also estimated in the right hand column

	Length of class (minutes)	Number of L1 situations	Word count of L1 situations: Total	Approximate word count in total	Approximate percentage of L1 use
Carrie	90	3	5	4075	0.1
Susan	90	4	16	4075	0.4
Ben	90	1	21	4075	0.5
Total	**270**	**8**	**42**		Average: **0.3**

Table 4.1 shows that the amounts of L1 use range from 0.1 to 0.5 per cent, an extremely low use. The average percentage of L1 use for upper secondary levels overall is 0.3. These low scores illustrate that the need to use the L1 for these three classes is low, and also that the teachers manage to adjust their L2 well.

All three teachers appeared very comfortable in their roles as EFL instructors during the observations, and they all spoke quite fluently and quite rapidly. Their class dynamics were also quite good. When there were misunderstandings or comprehension problems, the students often asked questions that prompted an explanation. All of the teachers initially responded in the L2, explained the situations in different terms, used the blackboard, or used the other students actively to explain it differently. Not one of the registered situations in

[1] For the situations that could not be transcribed due to poor sound conditions the words are as a natural consequence not counted (see chapter 3).
[2] The approximate word count is based on an average of 14 classes from Grim's (2010) study, and is calculated and adjusted for the actual length of each of the current lessons (see chapter 3).

these classrooms involved a situation where the students asked a question related to comprehension, in which the teachers answer in the L1. The teachers themselves also initiated to explain terms or concepts in several different ways in the L2, illustrating excellent ability to adjust their L2. As mentioned, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to measure whether the students actually do comprehend, the *perceived* students' comprehension is mainly based on the quantity of use, and the teachers' evaluation of their own students during the interviews. Nevertheless, the appearance of a total of eight L1 situations in 4.5 hours of teaching illustrates very well that the need to use L1 is extremely low. The low use can as mentioned be related to several factors, which is to be discussed.

The different L1 uses

The different situations in which the L1 was used show consistent and similar patterns of use for the three VG3 teachers observed.

Table 4.2
Types of L1 uses: Upper secondary level
The percentages of the different L1 uses are here shown for each of the teachers, and so is the total use for all three teachers. Of the eight L1 situations, translations excel with 63 per cent, followed by conveyance of meaning and solidarity

	***Number* of L1 functions**	**Translation (%)**	**Task instruction (%)**	**Discipline (%)**	**Solidarity/ empathy (%)**	**Grammar explanation (%)**	**To convey meaning (%)**
Carrie	3	100	0	0	0	0	0
Susan	4	50	0	0	25	0	25
Ben	1	0	0	0	0	0	100
L1 use upper secondary (%)	**8**	**63**	0	0	**13**	**0**	**25**

Table 4.2 illustrates that of the eight L1 situations that transpired, 63 per cent of them were used for situations involving translations, as seen in the yellow marked cell. The remaining situations (25%) involved conveyance of meaning, and the last (13%) were used in situations of expressing solidarity. This type of functions of use do to a large extent coincide with the appropriate uses of L1 that the teachers' articulated during the interviews (see 4.1.1).

Translations took place in two of the three classrooms. In the five instances where translations of words or phrases occurred it included both immediate translations and translations where there were no cognates of the English words; two types of translations that were mentioned in the interviews as appropriate L1 use. Furthermore, it was also observed that the VG3 teachers used translations consisting of single-words in 80 per cent of the translations. *Example 1* below illustrates both an immediate and one-word translation. Note that this translation also offers an explanation of a word that the teacher seems to be uncertain about whether the students comprehend or not; the translation is elicited to assure comprehension. The teacher's more specific explanation of the use is accounted for in section 4.3.3. The relevant phrases are set in italics, while the L1 word(s) are italicized and highlighted in red.

> *Example 1:* Anna explains about legalization of same sex marriages, and immediately translates the word *referendum* after saying it.
> **Carrie:** Public support for legalizing same sex marriages have grown considerably, and various national polls conducted since 2000 show that the majority of Americans support same sex marriage. *So, and in the three states where they've actually asked, where they had, ehm, referendum, folkeavstemning, last Wednesday, last Tuesday, Wednesday our time, ehm, all three states passed saying yes, we should allow same sex marriages.*

The next example also illustrates an immediate and one-word translation of a word without a cognate:

> *Example 2:* After watching a film from the House of Commons the teacher makes a comment about the situation seen in the film, and uses the Norwegian term *Stortingssalen.* There is no English equivalent for the term.
> **Susan:** So, more pomp and circumstance, and would you imagine that there was this laughter and people talking and all that in *Stortingssalen*? You wouldn't have that, would you.

Furthermore, *Table 4.3* below illustrates the phenomena of low number of words used per L1 situation, which was very typical for the L1 situations seen. The column to the right shows the average number of L1 words for each L1 situation. These numbers are very low,

particularly for Carrie and Susan, and the overall average number 5.3 illustrates that whenever the L1 is used in these classrooms, the L1 is kept at an absolute minimum.

Table 4.3
Word count: Upper secondary level
It is here illustrated that the average frequency of L1 words used for each situation is very low with an average of 5.3

	Number of L1 situations	**Word count of transcribed situations: L1 words**	**L1 words for each L1 situation**
Carrie	3	5	1.7
Susan	4	16	4.0
Ben	1	21	21.0
Total upper secondary	**8**	**42**	Average: **5.3**

The two other types of situations that occurred were registered *as conveyance of meaning* and *sympathy*. However, two of these situations transpired after the lessons were finished. Conveyance of meaning transpired for two of the different teachers. In the first scenario the entire situation appeared very informal, and the teacher gives an informal answer to one of the students in form of chit-chatting. The other situation transpires in another classroom, and the situation seems motived by a belief that a student does not understand, and is also prompted by this student's question. The first situation, as shown in *example 3* below, does not reflect the teachers' opinion about appropriate use of L1, and appears to be motivated by other factors than the students' lack of comprehension.

> *Example 3:* Student asks to leave the class at the end of the lesson, the teacher responds in L1.
> **Student**: Kan vi gå i kantina når vi er ferdig?
> **Susan**: *Jah, dere kan få lov til å gå, noen har vel prøve neste time og.*
> **Students**: [Mumbling]
> **Susan**: Have a nice weekend!

As for the situation of conveyance of meaning, this was more in accordance with the legitimate use of L1 described in the interviews. The student appears to fail to comprehend, and consequently the teacher switches into the L1. *Example 4* shows how the situation transpired:

> *Example 4:* The lesson has ended, and the teacher approaches one of the students concerning a practical issue, not related to the English subject.
> **Ben:** (…) *møte med kontaktlærer frem til 9, også er det noe greier på timeplan.*
> **Student:** *Så er vi ferdig 11?*
> **Ben:** (…) *du har ikke noe timer eller sånt no?*

The last situation registered at upper secondary, was registered as expressing solidarity. I was not able to transcribe the situation because both the teacher and student whispered. The essence was nonetheless about another subject's homework, where the teacher tried to contribute, and the L1 did as mentioned appear to be used for a sense of closeness. However, the situation cannot be rendered, since I only am able to recount the essence of the conversation.

No task instructions nor maintenance of discipline were seen in the observations, in accordance with what was considered unnecessary L1 use as elicited in the interviews.

To sum up, the findings from the observations show very low and consistent levels of L1 use, and also similar patterns for the L1 use that do appear. The translation of single-words dominates, and conveyance of meaning and solidarity are also situations that appear. The different patterns of use, including for example the absence of task instructions and disciplinary maintenance, and the low use of solidarity, give the impression that the comprehension and proficiency level of the students' is high. It also illustrates that the teachers appear to adjust their L2 to a large extent, which is also supported by their self-evaluation and my evaluation. Both the quantity of L1 use and the distribution of the different uses touch upon several explanatory factors, such as teachers' competence and L2 adjustment, teachers' awareness and students' comprehension. I will return to this in section 4.3 and chapter 5, in the discussion.

4.2 Lower secondary level

In the following, the findings from lower secondary level's interviews and observations are presented, starting with the teachers' views as elicited by the interviews. The observations present the L1 use in relation to quantity of use and in which situations they are used for as for the upper secondary level.

4.2.1 The teachers' views – the interviews

Several factors that are related to the teachers' L1 use are discussed below.

Why the teachers may have different methodologies in EFL teaching

One of the factors that can affect teachers' choice of language is as mentioned the teachers' own proficiency, and in the interviews various answers were given concerning their self-evaluation. Kate evaluates her own English proficiency as good in all aspects, but she feels that her vocabulary comes up short some times, and adds that she has to upgrade her own English continuously. She also adds she feels more comfortable teaching in the L2 than in the L1 due to her passion for the subject. Anna evaluates her own English proficiency as relatively good, but she feels that her English has become more of a second language as the years pass by. She feels that her vocabulary is quite good, and that she self-corrects her language continuously. Liza feels comfortable with her own English reading and writing, but she is uncomfortable with her own proficiency level for teaching. She finds it strenuous to teach due to her own lack of education and routine, and is neither satisfied or comfortable with this. Indeed, the three teachers show great variation in their own assessment of their proficiency and confidence, which in turn might affect their use of L1.

Regarding these three teachers' choice on communication language in their teaching, two of them support a view of minimising the use of the L1, while the third teacher is more ambivalent to this. Anna and Kate largely agree about the importance of frequent L2 input as beneficial for the learning process. They do not agree completely on what the term maximising entails, which is a quite common disagreement as seen in the theoretical framework (see chapter 2), but they are both of the opinion that a minimal use of the L1 is beneficial. Kate's opinion is that it is necessary to use the L1 wherever it is necessary, and estimates a use of five to 10 per cent as appropriate for 8th grade level. It appears from her interview that the threshold to use the L1 is lower than Anna's. On the other hand, Anna argues that the teachers' awareness of their own L1 use is prevalent in language learning. She

claims she personally strives to use as much English as possible, in which results in a low use of the L1. Thirdly, Liza supports the idea that maximising the L2 in an EFL classroom is favourable, but she is the least rigid of these three teachers, and she adds: "To maximise the L2 is a subjective assessment that only leads to the question of *what is optimal* and *what is maximising*." Liza's perception of maximising is of a somewhat different character than for Karen and Anna; Liza personally believes that to use large amounts of the L1 in 8th grade is beneficial. She explains her L1 use as "creating a reassuring and safe environment for the students" and as "assuring the students' comprehension". She realises that many people disagree with her view, but she nevertheless believes that her students should experience bilingual English lessons. As mentioned, all three teachers basically agree that maximising the L2 in the EFL classroom is beneficial, but their opinions on the conceptualisation of maximising are ranged from almost no L1 use at all, to favouring bilingual EFL classrooms. They thus seem conscious in their choice of teaching methods, even though the methods do differ greatly. Whether they critically have evaluated the consequences of their approach is further discussed in the discussion in the next chapter.

How the teachers handle students' lack of comprehension

The students' comprehension appears to be one of the main factors conducive to the teachers shifting into the L1. All three emphasise that it is of great importance that their students comprehend what is being communicated in their teaching. It is apparent that adjustments to the perceived students' proficiency level are both present and desirable among these teachers, but their difference in the perception of their students' proficiency and comprehension level vary to a large extent and must also be taken into account. Anna claims that her students understand her very well, and that this primarily is caused by her adjustments of the L2. She states: "I adjust the language, and simplify it to a large extent. That makes sense to me." She also argues that non-comprehension is a part of the language learning, in which striving for learning is facilitative; it is simply not necessary to understand all the details of the input, on the contrary she claims that it is beneficial to fail to understand everything.

Next, Kate is of the opinion that her students comprehend most of the L2 input they are exposed to. Liza, on the other hand, is not sure whether her students understand her or not. She finds it "incredible" how little the students comprehend, and says that it feels very assuring that she can translate as much as she does in order to assure comprehension. Moreover, the teachers do adjust to the *perceived* students' proficiency level, and they do for

this reason adjust their L2 differently because their perceptions of their students' comprehension vary.

Also, these 8th grade teachers underline that the L1 is used to strengthen the relations between teacher and student(s). They want to give the students an assurance of a safe environment, and make the students "feel as a part of the class environment". Kate and Liza also argue that they want to avoid being "the English teacher only", and they use the L1 as a device to blur the distinctions between themselves as a teacher and a "care person".

When is L1 use okay?

There are a handful of specific situations where the teachers evaluate L1 use as appropriate and adjusted to the students' proficiency level. Again, they vary in their approaches and attitudes. They all list grammar explanation as an appropriate use of L1, which is explained as assurance of comprehension. Beyond this, disciplinary situations where the L1 is used as a tool to show authority are also considered suitable. As Anna says: "This demonstrates that English is not important anymore; now, it is you and me", referring to the students. Kate and Liza also find it necessary to use the first language in situations of expressing solidarity. As mentioned, the need to strengthen the relations between the teacher and student(s) is perceived, particularly by these two, as vital. In addition, all three teachers use task instructions in situations where the students need to understand important messages, e.g. for tests, exams etc. Liza says: "It is used to be certain that they understand, because comprehension is vital. I think it is inhumane not to use the L1. It is also time-saving for me, and it can be demanding for me to find other ways to say it in English." Besides, Liza is also the only teacher who titles herself as a simultaneous interpreter ("simultantolk"), and consciously chooses to translate large amounts of L2 to ensure comprehension. Moreover, they all agree that L1 can be used legitimately in specific situations such as grammar explanations, solidarity use, task instruction and translation, yet they disagree on the appropriate amounts of the L1 use.

These teachers also argue that underestimation of students and the teachers' lack of awareness are related to inappropriate L1 use. The effects of overuse of the L1 is described as demotivating for the students, and something that will deprive them for exposure to the L2. More specifically they believe that too much L1 can come at the expense of learning how to lead a conversation, and also directly affect the students' vocabulary. They stress that a proper role model in EFL learning is consistent in his or her L2 use, and are able to adjust their L2 as well. As mentioned, Liza does not agree to the same extent.

To sum up, all three teachers agree that maximising the L2 in the classroom is beneficial, and they agree on the different situations the L1 can be used in. On the other hand, they disagree on the appropriate amounts of L1 that should be used. Explaining factors, elicited from the interviews, are related to the teachers' proficiency level, their ability to adjust their L2, and their perception of their students' level of comprehension, and not the least their attitude towards the use of L1.

4.2.2 The teachers' L1 use – the observations

The results from the lower secondary's observations show great divergence between the three teachers with regard to the quantity of L1 use, and at the same time the findings display similarities regarding the different patterns of L1 use.

The setting of the observations will be presented initially, followed by a presentation of the quantity of L1 use. Due to the inconsistencies in the findings, the teachers will be presented as individual cases. Thereafter, the three teachers' patterns of L1 use will be presented.

The setting

The two first classes observed at lower secondary lasted 60 minutes, while the third lasted 90 minutes. All these lessons were similar in character as the lessons in upper secondary, as referred to in section 4.1.2 above. In short, this means that the teacher lectured about a topic for the majority of the lesson, but that group work and discussions in small groups and for the entire class were also included. Only one lesson included a grammar topic.

The quantity of L1 use

The observations from the three classes show very inconsistent results, and the findings range from two to 53 registered L1 situations per 60 minutes of teaching. As *Table 4.4* below shows, the variation ranges from an estimated use of 0.9 per cent to 46.1 per cent.

Table 4.4
Overview L1 use: Lower secondary level
The *different numbers of L1 situations illustrate the differences between the teachers in 8th grade. The yellow marked cells in the right column also illustrate how the teachers are inconsistent in their quantity of L1 use*

	Length of class (minutes)	Number of L1 situations	Word count of L1 situations: Total	Approximate word count in total	Approximate percentage of L1 use
Kate	60	14	208	2716	7.7
Anna	60	2	24	2716	0.9
Liza	90	79	1879	4075	46.1
Total	**210**	**95**	**2111**		Average: **18.2**

The varying percentages of L1 use for Anna, Karen, and Liza show that there are large inconsistencies between the different 8th grade teachers. These variations may indicate that there are several factors integrated in the explanations of the varying use. This will be accounted for more in detail in the sections below, and in chapter 5, the discussion.

Anna – low frequency of L1 use

Anna is very consistent in her L2 use. *Table 4.4* above shows that she only uses the L1 on two occasions, which corresponds to a total of 0.9 per cent of L1 use in her lesson. Indeed, this implies that the need to use L1 in her class is extremely low, and that she uses several measures to adjust her English to the student' L2 levels. *Table 4.5* below shows that her average use of L1 words per L1 situation is fairly low with approximately 12 words per situation, which implies that she is concise when she first uses the L1.

Regarding my subjective assessment of her teaching, I saw that she made a great effort to adjust to her students' proficiency level. Her level of English can be characterised as fairly elementary, and appears to be well adjusted to the students' proficiency at the 8th grade level. She talks very slowly, and her vocabulary is characterised by simple words and phrases. She often rephrases in different ways, and uses gestures extensively. There also seems to be a good class dynamic and good communication between the teacher and the students. Her L2 adjustments are in accordance with her own self-evaluation in the interview.

Kate – fairly low frequency of L1 use

Kate is generally quite consistent in her L2 use, and *Table 4.4* shows that she uses the L1 14 times during the 60 minutes session. This corresponds to 7.7 per cent of her L1 usage, which is still fairly low. *Table 4.5* also shows that her average use of L1 words per L1 situation is 14.9, which illustrates that she uses longer utterances of words.

Table 4.5
Word count: Lower secondary level
It is here illustrated that the average frequency of L1 words used for each situation is relatively high with a number of 22.2

	Number of L1 situations	Word count of transcribed situations: L1 words	Average L1 words for each L1 situation
Kate	14	208	14.9
Anna	2	24	12.0
Liza	79	1879	23.8
Total lower secondary	**95**	**2111**	Average: 22.2

Regarding my assessment of her teaching, it indicates that she also makes an effort to adjust her L2 to her student' proficiency level, although not as consistent as Anna. Her level of English appears to be more than adequate, but she speaks quickly and uses a wider vocabulary compared to the two other teachers. The class dynamic was more chaotic than in the previous class, but it is more or less under control. Furthermore, the teacher seems to have quite good contact with most of the students. It appears that she fails to adjust her L2 on several occasions, and resorts to the L1 before using alternative strategies in the L2.

Liza – high frequency of L1 use

Liza has an extremely high frequency of L1 use in her teaching. During the 90 minutes lesson, 79 L1 situations are registered, as seen in *Table 4.4* above. This equals 53 situations in a 60 minutes lesson, and corresponds to approximately 46 per cent L1 use during her teaching.

Her proficiency level, from my subjective assessment during the observation, indicates that she hardly adjusts her L2 at all. Her level of English appears quite basic, but should be more than adequate for her students' proficiency level. She also speaks quite

slowly and uses large amounts of gestures; consequently making her English easy to comprehend. At the same time, the class dynamic according my assessment is almost absent. The class seems unfocused for almost the entire lesson, and the teacher appears to be ignored by the students most of the time.

In relation to the amounts of L1 use, *Table 4.5* above shows that Liza has a considerable higher rate of number of words used for each L1 situation, with 23.8 words per L1 situation. This illustrates what was seen during the observations; that her characteristic use of the L1 appeared in separate chunks as a whole, rather than as sole L1 utterances in an L2 context. This means that the sequences of L1 words were significantly longer compared to the other two. Her high use indicates several aspects that will be returned to in section 4.3, and in the discussion.

The different L1 uses

The different L1 situations that transpired during the observations of the three classes at lower secondary level show some common patterns, despite the differences in quantity of use. *Table 4.6* below shows the percentages of each of the different functions during the separate teachers respective teaching.

Table 4.6
Types of L1 use: Lower secondary level
The percentages of each of the different L1 uses seen in the separate teachers respective teaching are shown in this table. It shows that despite the differences in quantity, the different uses are consistent to a large degree

	***Number* of L1 functions**	**Translation (%)**	**Task instruction (%)**	**Discipline (%)**	**Solidarity/ empathy (%)**	**Grammar explanation (%)**	**To convey meaning (%)**
Kate	14	14	29	7	29	7	14
Anna	2	0	50	50	0	0	0
Liza	79	18	19	42	14	0	8
L1 use lower secondary (%)	**(Total) 95**	**17**	**21**	**37**	**16**	**1**	**8**

The yellow marked cell on the lowest row shows the most common use of all the categories. In 37 per cent of the total amount of L1 uses, the L1 was used for *discipline*. This use is seen with all three teachers. In the 35 disciplinary situations that transpired, the teachers use the L1

to deal with lack of concentration, noise, talk, misconduct, et cetera. In the situation in *example* 5 below, Anna appears to use the L1 to remedy a situation that is heading out of control. The dialogue was very subdued, and no transcriptions were possible because the teacher was whispering, combined with a high level of noise in the classroom at the time. The example following is therefore a result of notes taken during the observation, immediately after the situations unfolded, so the wording should be correct. The relevant phrases are set in italics, while the L1 words are italicized and highlighted in red.

> *Example 5:* Three students are talking at the back of the class while the teacher is lecturing, and one of them walks around. The teacher approaches them, and confronts one of the students in the L1.
> **Anna**: *Hva i all verden er det her, nå går du og sitter på plassen din.*

Example 5 above is fairly representative for the disciplinary situations that occurred in all the three different classes; a sentence typically reprimanding undesirable behaviour among the entire class, small groups, or individuals. In Liza's classroom there were also several disciplinary situations where the L1 appeared in chunks, as seen in *example 6* below. As mentioned, the class dynamic appeared as chaotic throughout the lesson, and the number of disciplinary situations illustrates very well her several and repeated attempts to discipline these students. Even though, the L1 was used to deal with noise and talk in the two other classes as well.

> *Example 6:* The students are doing group work and the level of concentration is very low and the level of noise is high. The teacher addresses the whole class.
> **Liza:** Listen, please, be quiet now. Could you please? Remember the first two lessons we had today, and I said that this was the perfect working environment. *Da var det helt perfekt jobbestemning her, kan vi ikke prøve å finne tilbake til det. Vi blir så mye mindre slitne etterpå. Dere bør samle krefter til Kunst og Håndverk etterpå. Ikke sitt og skravl nå, holdt helt munn, dere skal være konsentrerte.* We'll read through the text, or I'll read it, and we'll translate every word you don't understand. And afterwards, you will write five questions on your own, and after that you will work two and two.

Following the disciplinary use is the use of L1 for *task instructions*. As can be seen in *Table 4.6*, L1 task instructions were given in 21 per cent of the situations. This is also the case in all the three different classes. The task instructions typically occur as quite simple instructions; the length of the instructions are most typically rather short, and the L1 statements are often integrated in sequences of L2. The situations in which the L1 is used as task instruction are most often in relation to specific activities, but also as general instructions of classroom management. As for Liza's teaching, it must again be mentioned that many of her task instructions come in larger chunks. Her task instructions were also typically combined with translation[3]. Both Karen and Liza would often initiate an immediate translation themselves without any prompts from the students. There were also situations where the task instruction immediately was given in the L1, not preceded by the English expression. *Example 7* and *8* below show typical situations of task instructions given in the L1:

> *Example 7:* The lesson is about to end for the day, and the teacher gives some instructions.
> **Kate:** *Dere, vi må rydde litt i rommet og vi må pusse tavla,* [unclear], on Thursday, boys and girls…

> *Example 8:* The teacher reads from one of the hand-outs she recently handed out:
> **Liza:** It says "make five questions to the text", at the front, and you were supposed to write four things about Australia that you know for homework. You can use that to make questions. *Lage spørsmål til den teksten, det er en tekst om geografi og historie og litt fakta om Australia, også skal dere lage fem spørsmål, og dere kan sitte sammen, hvis dere ser på task and activities on the next page, sit in pairs and take turns. Etter at dere har laget fem spørsmål så setter dere dere sammen og spør hverandre.*

The relative common use of task instruction may well be connected to the young age of these students, in combination with their level of proficiency, as is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In 16 per cent of the total amount of L1 uses, the L1 is used to create a sense of closeness with students, either to show understanding or to create a friendly support,

[3] These examples are nevertheless coded as only one category as mentioned in the methodology chapter 3

categorised as *solidarity*. Chatting informally with the students as a whole or with groups and individuals was frequently registered. In the 15 situations of solidarity that transpire, the L1 seems to be used in order to strengthen relations. In *example 9* below Kate expresses some kind of assurance for the insecure student, making sure that their answer is recognized regardless of the potential mistakes.

> *Example 9*: The teacher writes translation tasks on the blackboard, and the students answer in plenary. One of the students asks a question regarding one of the translation tasks. Kate explains that there can be several solutions.
> **Student:** Hva betyr [unreconizable]?
> **Kate:** *[unreconizable]*
> **Student:** Er det feil?
> **Kate:** *Nei, det er ikke feil. Det er ikke feil. Noen ganger er det ikke noen fasitsvar, det kommer an på hva du synes er best og hva du ønsker å fremheve rett og slett, i setningen. Okay?*

The characteristic informal chatting with the students is shown in *example 10* below. The situation may indicate a form of strengthening the relation to the students through "levelling", or by identifying with their first language.

> *Example 10:* During a quiz the teacher starts to talk about a book she read in order to exemplify some of the answers to a quiz.
> **Liza:** *(…) Det er sted som jeg fortalte om, den boken der jeg hadde lest? Det er en amerikansk dame som reiser og går… "The Real People" heter den. Du vakke her, nei?*

As mentioned, the L1 use in *translations* occurred very often in the situations that unfolded in Liza's classroom. In contrast to the use of translations at upper secondary, these translations appeared in large chunks where the frequency of L1 words were higher. However, the only translations that are coded as "translation" are the translations that are isolated, and where the translation for example contains a direct translation of a word of phrase. Most often immediate translations were given without cues from any of the students. *Example 12* below describes a situation like this:

Example 12: The teacher reads from a text, and stops on her own initiative, and asks a question relating to the students' comprehension.
Liza: The 19th century, *hvilket århundre er det? Det 19ende århundre.*

Liza's insecurity concerning her students' comprehension comes into sight in this example.

Regarding the use of L1 for grammar explanation, there was only one lesson comprising grammar teaching. Therefore, of natural causes, this type of L1 use was absent in the other lessons observed. This is one of the situations in which all the teachers agree that L1 can be used appropriately. Even though it was not characteristic of these six observations, *example 13* below illustrate how a situation like this transpires:

Example 13: One of the grammar topics for the lesson is the progressive aspect, and the teacher writes –ing sentences on the blackboard, and subsequently explains.
Kate: This is a very nice way of doing it. *Du må bøye det første verbet som står her, og det må stå i infinitiv.* Sitting, sit, sat.

L1 was also used for conveyance of meaning to small extent, most often to check comprehension.

All in all, the findings from the observations at the lower secondary level display great variation in the teachers' quantity of L1 use, and at the same time the results show similar patterns for the teachers' use of L1. The variation in the quantity may be explained by several factors, such as teachers' proficiency and confidence, their ability to adjust their L2, their attitude of L1/L2 use, and equally important, their perceptions of their students' proficiency levels. The patterns of use, in combination with the relative high frequency of L1 words used for each situation, may primarily be related to the age and proficiency level of the students. The consistency related to the different uses of L1 supports this. These indications will be accounted for in the following section, and chapter 5, the discussion.

4.3 A comparison of L1 use

The sections above present the separate findings from the 8th grade at lower secondary level and VG3 level in upper secondary, and represent six different teachers' use of L1 with regard

to both quantity and function of use. The following section will compare and contrast the findings regarding both quantity and quality from both of these levels in order to understand and explain the variations in L1 use.

4.3.1 Comparing the quantity of L1 use

The comparison between the different levels shows that there are similarities and differences regarding the quantity of L1. While the VG3 teachers' L1 use is very consistent, the 8th grade teachers' L1 use is quite varied and at times inconsistent, which indicates that there are several factors that affect the L1 usage.

Table 4.7 below shows the numbers of L1 situations that transpired during the teaching, adjusted for 60 minutes lesson. It also shows the percentage of L1 use for each of the teachers, including the average estimates. In upper secondary the quantity of use is stabile, and varies between 0.1 to 0.5 per cent use of L1 per 60 minutes. This, and the average percentage of 0.3, illustrates an extremely low use of L1 for the upper secondary level.

Table 4.7
Comparison quantity of L1 use
Table 4.7 gives an overview of the number and percentages of L1 situations and use per 60 minutes of teaching for each of the teachers, in addition to the average numbers

	***Number* of L1 situations per 60 minutes**	***Percentage* of L1 use**
Carrie	2	0.1
Susan	2.7	0.4
Ben	0.7	0.5
Average upper secondary	**1.8**	**0.3**
Kate	14	7.7
Ann	2	0.9
Liza	52.7	46.1
Average lower secondary	**22.9**	**18.2**

In contrast, the findings from lower secondary level show great variation. The table illustrates how the L1 use ranges from 0.9 to 46.1 per cent for a 60 minutes lesson. Indeed, these inconsistent findings of L1 quantity between both the different levels and between the

separate teachers indicate that there are several factors that can affect the quantity of L1 use. As touched upon previously in the theoretical framework, it appears as the teachers' amounts of L1 use reflect their own proficiency level, their L1/L2 attitudes, their perception of their students' proficiency level, and their ability to adjust their L2 continuously in their teaching.

To explain the variation in quantity of L1 use more easily, *Table 4.8* displays the abovementioned factors with regard to the three 8th grade teachers. The consistency between the interviews and observations is here taken into account, and the teachers' views as elicited in the interviews, are presented in addition to my assessment from the observations.

The column to the left, *own proficiency level*, shows the evaluation of the teachers' competence level, ranging from low to high, including +'s and –'s to illustrate whether the assessment teeter one way or the other. The next column, *the teachers' L2 attitude*, describes the attitudes regarding use of L1 in EFL teaching. Next, *the perception of students' level of proficiency and comprehension* is presented. The fourth column shows the evaluations of *the teachers' ability to adjust their L2 in teaching*. Lastly, the fifth column shows the teachers' actual L1 use. And as mentioned, in addition to the teachers' self-evaluation, my evaluation of these factors is also mentioned.

Table 4.8
Explaining factors of varying L1 use
The table displays the lower secondary teachers' variations in use of L1. The inconsistencies seen from the observations and interviews are also rendered. The right column showing their actual L1 uses can be explained in relation to all the factors shown in the columns to the left, in addition to the inconsistencies seen between the interviews and observations

Teacher	Methods of assessment	Own proficiency level	The teachers' L2 attitude	The perception of students' level of proficiency and comprehension	**The teachers' ability to adjust their L2 in teaching**	**Actual L1 use (%)**
Kate	Interview[4]	High (-)	Rigid	High	High	7.7
	Observation[5]	*Adequate*	Rigid (-)	High (-)	Medium (+)	
Anna	Interview	Medium (+)	Rigid	High	High	0.9
	Observation	*Adequate*	Rigid	High	High	
Liza	Interview	Low	Relaxed	Low	Low	46.1
	Observation	*Adequate*	Relaxed	Medium (+)	Low	

[4] Self-evaluated from the interview
[5] My evaluation from the observation

What can be seen from *Table 4.8* above is that all the teachers' proficiency levels appears adequate for their students' proficiency level. Details describing their teaching are given in section 4.1.2 above. However, their own evaluations of their proficiency levels vary. Next, there is a better correspondence between the interviews and observations with regard to the L2 attitudes. Then, the teachers' assessment of their students' proficiency and comprehension level coincide for all but one of the teachers. Lastly, their ability to adjust their L2 vary from teacher to teacher.

These factors may in combination influence the actual L1 use, which is further discussed in the next chapter 5, the discussion. Furthermore, the VG3 teachers scored high on all the abovementioned factors, in addition to great conformity between interviews and observations, which may support the fact that deviation from one or more of these factors can predict actual L1 use in EFL instruction.

4.3.2 Comparing the uses of L1

In contrast to the complex findings regarding the comparison of quantity of L1 use, the teachers' different types of L1 use reveal clear differences between the lower and upper secondary levels. *Table 4.9* below illustrates the comparison of what has been accounted for in the sections above.

Table 4.9
Comparison of L1 functions
A comparison of the specific situations in which the L1 was used is shown, and it illustrates how the uses display separate patterns. The numbers from the word count also shows how the different L1 functions are used differently

	Upper secondary (%)	Lower secondary (%)
Translation	63	17
Discipline	0	37
Task instruction	0	21
Solidarity	13	16
Conveyance of meaning	25	8
Grammar explanations	0	1
Word count per L1 situation, average	*5.3*	*22.2*

The VG3 teachers use the L1 in translations in 63 per cent of the transpired situations, and there is also a considerable gap between the function of translation, and the next function; conveyance of meaning (25%). In contrast, the 8th grade teachers' L1 use is more prevalent, and *all* the different types of L1 use emerge during the observations. L1 used for disciplinary functions excel with 37 per cent, whereas task instructions, translations and L1 used for solidarity reasons are clustered around approximately 20 per cent. The lowest row in *Table 4.9* also shows how the L1 is used differently with regard to number of words used for each L1 situation. The upper secondary's low frequency of 5.3 words per situation illustrates short phrases of L1, in which was very characteristic for the situations that were observed. In contrast, the lower secondary's average number of 22.2 words per L1 situation shows a four doubling of the number of words, which illustrate that the teachers' utilise longer phrases of L1. This can probably be caused by a greater need for more extensive explanations at the lower levels of teaching.

All in all, these tendencies of use may imply that the factors explaining the variation in patterns of use mainly may be related to the students' proficiency level, and age. This is in contrast to the teacher-centred factors that possibly explain the quantity of L1 use. This is further discussed in detail in the following chapter.

4.3.3 The teachers' explanations of their L1 use

To obtain a better understanding of the variation in L1 use, the teachers were as mentioned "confronted" with their own L1 use after the observations. As mentioned, the VG3 teachers unanimously agreed on the L1 use in certain types of translations during their interviews. As Carrie explains in relation to *example 1* in section 4.1.2: "To say *folkeavstemning*, right after the word referendum, ties the words together so that the students can have a better understanding." She explains the use in terms of support related to establish new concepts, and also confirms that she most often offers alternative explanations to words in the L2. Overall, the VG3 teachers L1/L2 attitudes and adjustments, in combination with their explanations of their own use, illustrate how the translations appear to be used for academic purposes. It thus indicates that the teachers' objective for the L1 translations is to expand vocabulary, and likewise support newly learned concepts, such as the word *folkeavstemning*.

As for the use of L1 for conveyance of meaning, both teachers in both of the transpired situations explained how they considered the lessons to be finished, and not being related to the English subject, which may explain the informal use of L1 in *example 3*. The

third situation was related to expressing solidarity, but was as mentioned not possible to transcribe, and neither did the teacher remember why she used the L1 in this situation when she was contacted by e-mail after the interview. This situation is therefore not further discussed.

All in all, the findings from the VG3 teachers' L1 use indicate that the L1 is used for academic purposes, adjusted to the VG3 students' level. Indeed, this pattern of use suggests that the different proficiency and comprehension level of the students might require different measures from the teachers.

The same phenomenon is seen with the 8th grade teachers, thus the patterns of use are quite different compared to the one at the VG3 level. The teachers' use is prevalent, but as mentioned, the L1 is first and foremost used to maintain discipline. This is by the teachers explained as showing authority. They feel that they by using the L1 manage to step out of the "teacher role" and represent themselves as serious, clear, and in leadership position. As Anna articulates: "Sometimes I feel that I need to be close to these students in order for them to listen, and sometimes I resort to the L1 to achieve this contact". Disciplinary L1 use is absent at the VG3 level, and some of the teachers at VG3 claim that the use of L1 for both disciplinary functions and task instruction are related to a teacher's difficulties of going "off script" and leading non-academic conversations. Regardless of this, the disciplinary L1 use still implies that these learners are younger of age, and may have needs beyond the academic context.

The 8th grade teachers also quite frequently use the L1 for task instructions, which is explained in terms of assuring the students' comprehension. Furthermore, fear of communication breakdown seems to be one of the strongest motivations to use the L1 for all the teachers regardless of level. However, the low amounts of L1 use indicate that for the majority of the informants, the L2 is often adjusted in order to avoid the use of L1, and complete communication breakdown is thereby avoided. In contrast, Liza's self-proclaimed fear of comprehension failure is quite clear, as can be seen in the following example:

> *Example 14:* Liza is going to read a text for the class as a whole, and before she starts she emphasises that they can ask if they do not comprehend what is being said.
> **Liza:** *Kan vi nå få begynt? Alle ser i teksten også skal jeg forsøke å uttale så vakkert som jeg klarer, så rekker dere opp hånda når det er vanskelige ord.*
> [Starts reading]

It appears as Liza expects the students to not comprehend, but while she is reading none of the students give any sign of non-comprehension:

> [No reaction from the class after reading for a minute]
> **Liza:** Is everyting clear, there?
> **Students:** Yes.
> **Liza:** *Her må det være noe dere er usikre på hva betyr? For eksempel explorers?*
> **Student:** Ikke forskere men, utforskere.
> **Teacher:** *Oppdagelsesreisende.*
> **Teacher:** Dutch?
> **Student:** Nederlendere.
> **Teacher:** Settle?
> **Student:** Bo?
> **Teacher:** *Mja, bosette seg.*
> [The teacher continues to ask of the translation of specific words]

As Liza continues to translate all these words, the students successfully comprehend the essence of all of the words as seen in the example above. In reference to the reading of this same text, the following statement from *example 6* above illustrates how Liza favours full comprehension: "We'll read through the text, or I'll read it, and *we'll translate every word you don't understand*" (italics added). First of all, it appears as if the students understand more than Liza realises. Second, the majority of the informants emphasised in the interviews, that the students do not need to understand every word that is spoken during the instruction, which is in contrast to what is observed in Liza's lesson. The perception of the students' comprehension and its relation to L1 use will be discussed more in detail in the discussion.

The L1 is also used for expressing solidarity with the students. The teachers explain it as a tool to strengthen the relations between the teacher and student(s). In the two lower secondary classrooms where the teachers express solidarity, the teachers explain their L1 use as significant for relationship building with their students. When Kate is asked whether it is necessary to use the L1 to strengthen these relations, she answers that they also strengthen relations in the L2, but certain amounts of L1 is necessary in order not to be alienated, and to

avoid emerging as “an English teacher only”. Again, the findings indicate that the students in 8th grade have needs beyond the academic context, which simply may be related to their age.

As mentioned several times, the findings from the observations show great differences in the use of translations in terms of number of words. This is supported by the 8th grade teachers’ explanations of their L1 translations, in which translation is explained not only as a tool to ensure comprehension, but also a device that increases the sense of security. This is in contrast to the VG3 teachers’ academically related explanations of translation. Accordingly, the differences related to the students’ proficiency level and age, are supported.

In addition, it should be mentioned that none of these teachers specifically mention authenticity as an argument of using the L2, even though this is used extensively to explain both L1 and L2 use in the theoretical framework.

All in all, the findings reflect differences between the students at the different levels, and they also show how the teachers adjust to these different needs accordingly. The explanations of the variations in use will now be further discussed in the next chapter, in the discussion.

5 Discussion

In the present chapter I start by reviewing the research statement, before I discuss the study's results in the light of relevant theory and research, and compare the lower and upper secondary levels' use of L1. Next, I attempt to answer the research question of "what explains variation in L1 use". An assessment of the reliability, validity, and transferability follows before I finally provide a summary of the main points that are presented.

5.1 Research statement

As stated in the introduction, my research statement is as follows: "A comparison of teachers' L1 use in the EFL classrooms at lower and upper secondary levels: What explains variation in L1 use?" In order to answer this question I observed six different teachers' language use in EFL classrooms for both the lower and upper secondary levels, in combination with interviews with the same teachers on different aspects of L1 use in their teaching.

On the whole, the findings show variation in both the quantity of L1 use and in the situations the L1 is used in. The variations are found between the lower secondary teachers internally, and between the levels. First, the investigation of the quantity of L1 use illustrates relatively unsystematic variation, as is also revealed by inconsistent findings from previous research (see chapter 1 and 2). All the three VG3 teachers consistently use extremely low amounts of L1, in contrast to the 8th grade teachers' inconsistent and varying use. Second, the variation in the patterns of use are more consistent and systematic; the VG3 teachers use the L1 primarily for short translations, whereas the 8th grade teachers use the L1 more widespread in situations as for discipline, in task instructions, for expressing solidarity, and in translations. Also, the stretches of words used for each situation were significantly longer for the 8th grade teachers.

All in all, the differences in the amounts of L1 use appear to be related to the teachers' background, attitudes and decisions, whereas the differences in the type and purpose of use probably can be explained as a consequence of a natural development of the students' increased proficiency, comprehension level, and age.

5.2 What are the variations of L1 use?

As presented in chapter 4, two types of variations in L1 use have been discovered in this study. The findings indicate that there are different explanations to the different types of

variations. I begin this section by presenting how the L1 is used with regard to the quantity of L1 use, before the patterns of use are presented.

5.2.1 How much L1 is used?

Initially, the quantity findings from the upper secondary level are presented, before the lower secondary level.

Consistent and low L1 use at the upper secondary level

The three VG3 teachers consistently use very low amounts of L1 in their EFL teaching, in contrast to what is shown in most of previous research studies. In this study, the L1 use ranges from a percentage of 0.1 to 0.5. As presented in chapter 1 and 2, previous studies show a wide range of L1 use, ranging from 0.1 to 100 per cent (e.g., Duff & Polio, 1990; Grim, 2010; Macaro, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994; Thompson, 2006; Wing, 1980). Moreover, the amounts of L1 use vary from study to study, and are thus quite inconsistent. These three teachers' consistent L1 use may be caused or influenced by individual and random differences between the teachers. The factors that possibly explain these variations are discussed in section 5.3 below.

From a theoretical point of view (see chapter 2), the low amounts of L1 use appear to agree with the L2 proponents' arguments in the L1/L2 debate. From their point of view, the teachers successfully manage to conduct their lessons in the L2, thereby exposing their students to large amounts of L2. Thus, they teach their students English without depriving them of valuable input, in accordance with for instance Ellis' (1994) recommendations (p. 133). Still, the teachers do use the L1 on some occasions, demonstrating that they avoid using the L2 on principle, as is argued by Turnbull (2001), who claims that a too rigid use of the L2 can counteract the language learning process (p. 535). Furthermore, these teachers embrace what Wong-Fillmore (1985) considers an integral and facilitative part of language learning, in which "the students try to figure out what their teachers and classmates are saying" (p. 35). The VG3 teachers stated and stressed in their interviews that one widespread misunderstanding is that all the words spoken in the lesson must be comprehended. On the contrary, they argued that non-comprehension, i. e. comprehension of context, is not only sufficient, but also facilitative. This is also in accordance with previous research findings (Grim, 2010, p. 206; Wong-Fillmore, 1985, p. 37). The measures that are taken to handle situations of lack of comprehension are in accordance with those of Harbord (1992) and Polio

and Duff (1994). For instance, teacher Ben "repeats in English, and uses a simpler language" at sign of comprehension failure. This was also what I observed in all the VG3 teachers' lesson.

Regardless of the inconsistencies with previous research, these teachers demonstrate how they apparently successfully manage to conduct EFL lessons using the L2 for over 99 per cent of the time.

Varying L1 use at the lower secondary level

The 8th grade teachers use varying amounts of L1 in their teaching, which is in accordance with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Duff & Polio, 1990; Grim, 2010; Macaro, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994; Thompson, 2006; Wing, 1980). Their use varies from 0.9 to 46 per cent, and the variation between the teachers is inconsistent with regard to the students' proficiency level, as previous research has indicated. Here again, no clear relationship between the teachers' quantity of L1 use and the students' proficiency level can be established. Accordingly, several other factors may explain these variations in use. This is also supported by for example Thompson (2006), who suggests that the variations in quantity mainly are a result of the "individual variation" of the instructors (p. 224).

Since the three teachers vary in their amounts of L1 use, they can be associated with different sides in the L1/L2 debate. Both Anna and Kate are associated with the attitudes of the L2 proponents as described above. These two promote adjustments of the L2, in which they "simplify the language to a large extent" (see chapter 4), and stress that a contextual understanding is both sufficient and facilitative for the language learning. Liza, on the other hand, teaches in accordance with what Atkinson (1987) terms as "maximum efficiency" in her lesson with high levels of L1 use (p. 247). As Liza states in the interview, and in accordance with for example Cook's (2001a) view, the L1 is used as an element to support the EFL teaching. The L1 is by her considered as a classroom resource that supposedly facilitates the process of language learning by improving for example the students' comprehension. However, Liza's perception of her students' low comprehension level appears to be at odds with any side in the L1/L2 debate. Her description of her students' comprehension level as "incredibly low" is the opposite of my impression from the observation (see example 14 in chapter 4). Equally important, she translates to the L1 in situations where she is unsure whether the students comprehend or not, instead of initially adjusting her L2. It is possible that her underestimation of her students, combined with her

lack of L2 adjustment, results in her high level of L1 use. This is discussed in section 5.3 below.

Summary

All in all, the differences in quantity of use indicate that there are several factors that explain the variations in use. Based on this study and previous research, it appears that the students' proficiency level is *not* the main explaining factor of the varying amounts of L1 use. This indicates that other factors, primarily related to individual variations of the teachers, may contribute to the explanation of the variation.

Furthermore, the low use of the L1 by both by the VG3 and some of the 8th grade teachers indicates that it is feasible to conduct EFL instruction with large amounts of L2. The individual findings from Anna's (0.9%) and Kate's (7.7%) use of L1 show that it is feasible to conduct EFL lessons at low levels almost exclusively using the L2, opposed to Liza's justification of 46.1 per cent L1 use in EFL instruction. This will also be further discussed in section 5.3 below.

5.2.2 In which situations is the L1 used?

The different patterns of L1 use are first presented for the upper secondary level, before the lower secondary level.

Isolated patterns of L1 use at the upper secondary level

As mentioned in chapter 4, the different situations the VG3 teachers use the L1 in follow a consistent pattern. The most common L1 use at the upper secondary level is by far translations, with 63 per cent of the total L1 use. The predominant use of translation for higher proficiency levels is supported by previous research (Thompson, 2006; Grim, 2010). Thompson (2006) states in his analysis that "the pattern of L1 use by instructors [college instructors] followed trends found in previous studies (…) where the bulk of the switches were done when addressing grammar issues and translating vocabulary" (p. 224). The fairly isolated use of L1 for translations suggests that the proficiency and comprehension level of these students are high. Furthermore, the low use of translations overall indicate that these three teachers actively adjust their L2 while teaching. In the interviews, they all emphasise that they deliberately avoid direct L1 translations and prefer to adjust their L2. The L1 is used to support and establish new concepts, as seen in the observations. It is also used where there

are no equivalents, for support. Instead of quickly resorting to the L1 in situations where translations can be used, the VG3 teachers use alternative L2 strategies such as "paraphrasing, definition, and multiple exemplification", as in accordance with Harbord's (1992) recommendations of an appropriately adjusted L2 (p. 354). Again, it appears as these upper secondary teachers are of the same opinion as Wong-Fillmore (1985), where optimal language learning are allowed to occur inductively. By adjusting their L2, the teachers avoid "short-circuiting" the dialogue, which often prevents the students from "tuning out" since they do not expect that translations will be given (Wong-Fillmore, 1985, p. 35). In addition to this, all the translations comprised one to three words only at this level. As mentioned in chapter 4, short translations indicate an L1 use centred on vocabulary negotiation. This is also what Grim (2010) and Polio and Duff (1994) found in their analysis (Grim, 2010, p. 203; Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 321).

In addition, there were a total of three situations where the L1 was used for expressing solidarity and conveyance of meaning. Two of these situations transpired after the lessons were over, and the teachers' explained their L1 use as a result of this (see chapter 4). The third was related to expressing solidarity, but is as mentioned not valid enough to be discussed (see chapter 4).

Moreover, the isolated use for academic purposes may reflect the high proficiency and comprehension level of these students. In addition, the absence of the L1 use for example maintaining discipline and relationship-building, may indicate that they are older students, thus more mature.

Widespread patterns of L1 use at the lower secondary level

The widespread patterns of use observed at the lower secondary level were consistent for all three teachers. This type of extensive use also follows trends found in previous studies at similar levels (Grim, 2010; Macaro, 2001; Thompson, 2006). Indeed, all the different types of L1 use emerged in the observations. L1 used for disciplinary functions excel with 37 per cent, whereas task instructions, translations and L1 used for expressing solidarity are clustered around approximately 20 per cent. It was although infrequently used for grammar explanations (1%).

Several studies show the same patterns of use at lower levels of proficiency: Macaro's study (2001) of 11 to 14 years old French students (students that had been studying French for one to three years) shows that the L1 was primarily motivated by vocabulary clarification, translation, grammar explanations, discipline, relationship building, and procedural

instructions (pp. 539 – 544). Also, Grim's (2010) analysis of high school students (3rd semester of French) shows widespread L1 use in class management/discipline, task instructions and metalinguistic explanations, in addition to translations and grammar explanations (p. 203). As elicited in the interviews, the 8th grade teachers argue that their students have needs beyond the academic context. This is first and foremost reflected in their use of L1 for disciplinary situations. The L1 is thus used as a measure to appear "serious, clear, and in leadership position", as stated in the interviews. This conforms to for example Cook's (2001a) preference of giving the academic content less priority in order to effectively deal with lack of concentration, noise, misconduct, etc. (Cook, 2001a, p. 415). These findings may indeed reflect students that are younger of age, who may be more prone to behaviour that requires maintenance of discipline.

Also, the lower level of proficiency of these students may be reflected by the high number of L1 task instructions (21%). According to Harmer (2007), it makes more sense to use the L1 for explanations for students at low levels, because they know less English (p. 135). Also, as Grim (2010) states, based on the findings from his analysis: "Their language choices [the teachers'] might have been based on presuppositions of what learners can cognitively handle" (p. 207). Moreover, it appears that the 8th grade teachers are quite aware of their students' fairly limited proficiency level, and therefore choose to translate more in accordance with the opinions of Atkinson (1987) and Cook (2001a). They thus suggest that the use of L1 for task instruction is particularly useful for lower levels (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001a). However, Liza appears to be the teacher who is most motivated by fear of comprehension failure, as she states in the interview. This might affect her use of L1, as is discussed in the sections below.

The translations are also used to assure comprehension (see chapter 4). Longer stretches of L1 words show that the utterances are more extensive compared to the isolated translations used in the VG3 level. This may indicate that a larger amount of L1 is necessary to convey the message. Again, this may also reflect a lower proficiency level. The L1 use for conveyance of meaning and grammar explanations support the implication that the teachers are dealing with students that are less educated.

Next, the use of L1 to express solidarity may indicate a need to strengthen relations, as is supported by previous research (Grim, 2010; Thompson, 2006). Also, as presented in chapter 2, this type of use is associated with "treating the students as their real selves rather than dealing with assumed L2 personas" (Cook, 2001a, p. 416). Both Karen and Liza, who

quite extensively used the L1 to express solidarity, state that their relations between themselves and their students are important. They express fear of being "the English teachers only", and argue that the L1 is a necessity in order to avoid this. Even though the L2 also is used to build relations, they both insist that the L1 is necessary to create some sort of relaxed atmosphere.

To sum up, the varying patterns of L1 use reflects different needs for the lower and upper secondary levels. Vocabulary negotiation seems to be the main cause of L1 use in the VG3 level, reflected in the use of isolated translations. The widespread use of L1 functions in 8th grade reflects a more extensive need for comprehension, a need to build relations, and a need to train the students to obey rules and codes of behaviour through discipline. Likewise, the absence of these types of L1 use by the VG3 teachers is in accordance with Grim's (2010) findings, which he explains as possibly caused "by the fact that the students were generally more mature and motivated" (p. 205). The students' difference level of proficiency and age appear to initiate different types of L1 use.

5.3 What explains variation in L1 use?

As discussed above, the variations of L1 use can have several explanations. The explanation of variation in quantity of L1 use first and foremost appears to be teacher-centred, whereas the variation in patterns of use relate to student-centred explanations. The two different variations in L1 use are explained separately below.

It must be emphasised that since the qualitative study is conducted with only six informants, I am not attempting to argue for any causal relationships among the variables observed and the teachers' use of L1. The motivation for the study is an attempt to understand the explanatory factors that initiate L1 use in relation to both quantity and purpose. The following discussion therefore suggests several factors that may have *influenced* the results. Neither can I rule out that there are other variables that can explain the varying L1 use.

5.3.1 What explains variation in L1 quantity?

Based on the data collected in this study, in addition to what is revealed in previous research, there are four factors that can possibly explain the variations in the quantity of L1 use. These

are all related to the teachers' attitudes and decisions. An overview of these factors was given in section 4.3.1 in *Table 4.8.*

The teachers' background and proficiency level

The teachers' competence and proficiency level has been investigated in some studies, but no relationship has been found between the amounts of L1 use and the teachers' proficiency level (Duff & Polio, 1990; Grim, 2010; Polio & Duff, 1994). Still, these factors have been suggested as influencing the use of L1 to some extent, by for example Polio and Duff (1994, p. 323).

As described in 3.4.3, all the informants have studied English as a subject and have completed the required practical teacher training courses. Liza diverges from the rest of the sample with her short teacher experience of two years, which she explicitly articulates as a challenge for her teaching. Despite her low level of experience and confidence, I evaluated her level of teaching as more than adequate for instructing 8th grade students. As Hellekjær (2001) promotes, it is important "to feel comfortable when using the language (…)" in order to teach English with fluency and accuracy (p. 192). Comparing Liza's competence level to Anna's, they both appear rather equal in terms of vocabulary, pace of speech, and use of gestures. They should both be competent enough to conduct an EFL lesson using the L2 based on their background and proficiency level. But as mentioned, Anna uses 0.9 per cent L1 in her teaching, opposed to Liza's 46 per cent. It is difficult to decide to what extent Liza's background, proficiency, and level of confidence influence her L1 use. However, Anna's similar competence and confidence level demonstrates that it is feasible to conduct EFL instruction in 8th grade using the L2 almost exclusively.

The teachers' L2 adjustment

As previously discussed, the teachers' ability and desire to adjust their L2 varies. The five teachers, particularly Ben, Susan, Carrie, and Anna master the adjustment of their L2 to fit with their teaching very well, and this is thus reflected in their low amounts of L1 use. They also stated in the interviews that these adjustments are a part of the language learning process. Again, Liza shows other tendencies than the rest of the group and does not appear to adjust her L2 as easily and effortlessly as the others. Neither does it appear that she wants to adjust her L2 as a part of her EFL instruction. Nevertheless, Polio and Duff's (1994) study does suggest that the use of L1 at sign of comprehension failure may be caused by lack of competence in terms of "necessary experience or strategies to rephrase or otherwise modify

their speech" (p. 323). This was also stated by some of the teachers in the interviews (see chapter 4). It was specifically mentioned that teaching that "goes off script" might lead to L1 use as a result of lack of the ability to adjust. Harbord (1992) also suggests that the teachers' use of L1 often is due do inadequate training in alternative L2 strategies (p. 353). It could thereupon be suggested that Liza lacks the skills to adjust her L2 whenever the teaching "goes off script", in addition to her attitude. Again, it is impossible to decide whether Liza lacks the ability to adjust her L2 in her teaching. However, the less a teachers modifies the L2 in situations of communication breakdown, the more L1 will be used, which seems rather fitting for the description of Liza's teaching. In my opinion, a teacher should nonetheless be able to handle spontaneous situations that require adjustments of the L2, in other words have a repertoire of L2 strategies that can be used. The spontaneous situations that not necessarily are a part of the scripted language learning, thus reflect an authentic setting of language use. The students' observations of how their teacher handles these types of situations in the L2 can probably facilitate the language learning process. This should be taken into considerations regardless of what side one favours in the L1/L2 debate.

The teachers' L1/L2 attitude in EFL teaching

As discussed in chapter 4, the VG3 teachers are rigid with regard to their L2 attitude in both the observations and interviews, and combined with their extremely low amounts of L1 use this may at least partly be related to each other. As for the 8th grade teachers, Both Anna and Kate, who display a relatively low use of L1 (0.9 – 7.7%), are rigid in their attitude towards the use of the L1, and they strive to use the L2 as much as possible. In contrast, Liza, who uses almost 50 per cent L1 in her teaching, is very relaxed about her L1 use. As elicited in the interview, Liza supports language learning comprising "bilingual" EFL lessons. This is done to offer the students complete comprehension. It is probable that Liza is an outlier in this sample, and that her views deviate from the general opinion. However, her attitudes tend to reflect her extended use of L1. This type of attitude is at odds with any recommendations reviewed in previous literature and research. Regardless of side in the L1/L2 debate, Levine (2011) points out that language teachers "can and should be aware of, reflect critically on" the use of L1 and L2 in their classroom (p. 9). Several authors and researchers emphasise the importance of the awareness around the use of L1 (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Harmer 2001; Hellekjær, 2001; Turnbull, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994; Grim, 2010). Furthermore, one of Polio and Duff's (1994) main findings relate to consciousness-raising among teachers since they may not realise how much L1 they are using (p. 323).

In my opinion, all the teachers, with the exception of Liza, reflect critically on their L1 use in their teaching. It is my impression that she has chosen to teach bilingual EFL lessons, but it is also my impression that she may not have considered the consequences of an approach like this. An L1 use that is not used critically and deliberately, can consequently lead to an overuse of the L1. As Harbord (1992) argues: "The L1 is not a device to make life easier for the teacher or the students" (p. 355), thereby suggesting a critical and carefully evaluated use of the L1 as a classroom resource.

The perception of the students' proficiency/ comprehension level

By way of introduction, the students' proficiency and comprehension level explain the quantity of L1 use, and more importantly the patterns of use. In the interviews the teachers articulated that they may use the L1 at the sign of comprehension failure with the students, but after initial attempts of adjusting the L2. As mentioned in the introduction, the pilot for this study (Hoff, 2012) also found that the teachers have different thresholds related to the point of time they resort to the L1. The perception of the students' comprehension level appears as strongly associated to this decision. The perception and the students' actual proficiency and comprehension level therefore seem to be of great importance in predicting the use of L1. As mentioned, the perception of the students' comprehension level is based on the teachers' own perceptions, and my evaluation from the observations (see chapter 3).

The three VG3 teachers, and the 8th grade teachers Anna and Karen, all perceive their students' comprehension level as high, and they all display a low use of L1 with regard to quantity (0.9 – 7.7%). Indeed, their perception of their students' comprehension may influence their amounts of L1 use. What may strengthen this prediction is that Liza evaluates her students' comprehension level as "incredibly low", and for this reason she explains that she uses large amounts of L1 (see chapter 4). In contrast, my evaluation from the observation of the students did not concur with Liza's. My overall impression was that these students did comprehend what was communicated to a large extent (see *Table 4.8)*. This was for instance demonstrated when Liza read a text where it appeared as she expected the students not to understand, but where the students were able to translate all the words they were asked for (see example 14, chapter 4). Indeed, it appears as the level of these students was underestimated. Grim (2010) thus explains underestimation of students as "triggered by fear of comprehension breakdown" (p. 206). Certainly, Liza herself explains her fear of non-comprehension as initiating her extensive L1 use.

Of equal importance, to translate in order to assure complete comprehension is at odds with what is considered as facilitative language learning. Grim (2010) argues that the teachers' spontaneous translations will deprive the students of the ability to show that they actually comprehend what is being said (p. 206), which was exactly what happened in example 14. They similarly lose the opportunity to take advantage of an inductive learning process (Wong-Fillmore, 1985, p. 35).

In other words, it appears as the perception of the students' comprehension and proficiency level can influence the amounts of L1 used in EFL instruction.

All in all, these four factors are inextricably connected in explaining the variation of quantity of L1 use. Though, it appears as a competent teacher with a repertoire of L2 strategies is necessary in order to avoid overuse of L1. In addition, it is important that the teachers critically reflect over their own L1 use, and its consequences. And that they can evaluate their students' comprehension level fairly accurately.

5.3.2 What explains variation in patterns of L1 use?

As mentioned in section 5.2.2 above, it is implicated that the explanations related to the different levels' patterns of L1 use might be related to the students. The students' development in proficiency level and maturation appear as possible explanations as to why the lower and upper secondary teachers use the L1 in different situations. The study's findings are thus in accordance with those of Polio and Duff (1994), Grim (2010) and Thompson (2006), as described in detail above.

First, the isolated use of L1 for short translations at the VG3 level compared to the longer utterances of L1 use for task instructions, translations, conveyance of meanings, and grammar explanations in 8th grade imply that the students have developed academically. This is in accordance with the findings of Grim (2010), Polio and Duff (1994), and Thompson (2006) who noted that the teachers' L1 use for vocabulary negotiation at higher levels of instruction is caused by the students' academic level. Indeed, as Harmer (2007) states: "The more they work in English, the better their English will get, and the better their English is, the less need we have of using the L1 (…)" (p. 135).

Second, the characteristics of the situations the L1 is used in appear to have changed from EFL instruction in 8th grade to the VG3 level. This mainly implies a development in age and maturation. This is accordingly reflected in the extensive use of L1 for disciplinary

situations, where it appears that there is a need to deal with lack of e.g. concentration. In addition, the absence of disciplinary use of the L1 at the VG3 level, is accordance with Grim's (2010) findings, in which the older students were described as "more mature and motivated" (p. 205).

Also, there seems to be a greater desire to establish teacher-student relationships at lower levels of teaching, which is reflected in the use of L1 to express solidarity. One of the measures taken to achieve a "relaxed atmosphere" and a supportive teacher character is the use of L1.

All in all, the different patterns of use imply that the students are different with regard to level of proficiency, maturation, and age. The students appear to develop from students who need disciplinary boundaries, teacher-student relationships, and have a greater need for comprehension, to students who more or less have needs that are academically related.

5.4 Can overuse of L1 be avoided?

The comparison of the lower and upper secondary levels in this study has yielded some different outcomes. First of all, the study has failed to establish a clear relationship between the teachers' quantity of use and the different proficiency levels. Instead, several other factors explain the variations in use. The quantity of use can thereof not be related to the concepts of scaffolding, as presented in the theoretical framework (see chapter 2). Second, and in contrast, the different patterns in L1 use are in accordance with the concepts of scaffolding and comprehensible input. As touched upon several times in this chapter, the L1 used as a classroom resource should build upon the knowledge and skills the student already possesses, but should also be difficult enough to allow new learning to occur. These are the main principles of the concepts of scaffolding and comprehensible input (Krashen, 1992; Young, 1993). In other words, the purposes of L1 use changes "as the learners gain the knowledge, skills and proficiency" (Young, 1993). Indeed, there is a significant change in patterns of use from the lower to the upper secondary level.

Accordingly, L1 use should be limited regardless of side taken in the L1/L2 debate. Furthermore, it is suggested that the students should be offered the opportunity to learn how to handle communication breakdowns (Foley, 1993). As Polio and Duff (1994) argue:

> *Although communication breakdowns of this nature [in language learning], are inevitable (…), when they occur in the TL [L2] the students presumably have a greater chance of learning how to negotiate meaning and interaction with others in that*

> *language. In fact, if instances of miscommunication are not negotiated through the TL [L2], the students may have limited opportunities to develop suitable strategies and conventions for initiating and undertaking repairs not only inside the classroom but outside as well* (p. 321)

Based on the results and the discussion, it appears as the majority of the informants implement the principles of comprehensible input and scaffolding. L2 adjustments and miscommunications are a considerable part of the EFL instruction in five of the classrooms observed. This is in accordance with what Polio and Duff (1994) argue as beneficial learning: "It is the very process of repetition and modification (e.g. simplification and paraphrasing) that we believe facilitate language acquisition" (p. 322). Liza is the only teacher that diverges from the sample in this respect, and in my opinion she does not allow communication breakdown to occur in her teaching to the same extent as the other teachers. Consequently, this might deprive her students of an important part of the language learning process.

Regardless of L1/L2 attitude it is important that the balance of L1 use does not tip too far, consequently making the L1 use counterproductive (Harmer, 2007, p.134). To avoid this it is important to consider what factors that can lead to overuse. First and foremost, it is important that the teachers have the proper competence and confidence to be able to adjust their L2 when teaching. It is of equal importance that they do not underestimate their students' comprehension, and thereby prevents inductive EFL learning to take place. As stated by Polio and Duff (1994): "Practices where the L1 is used to reduce the frustration level of the students may be short sighted" (p. 323). Indeed, some of this study's findings indicate that some of the L1 use is counterproductive for the language learning.

Furthermore, it is important that the teachers "reflect and make decisions critically on the role of the L1" in their EFL instruction in order to appropriately manage the L1 in the classroom (Grim, 2010, p. 207-8). It has been shown that the younger students at the lower levels have different needs compared to the older students. The L1 is therefore used to for example express solidarity or discipline. However, the L1 should be deliberately evaluated before it used in any type of situation for any level. It is important that the teachers are competent, confident, and aware of their students' competence level in order to evaluate their own use of L1 in EFL instruction. Indeed, Anna's extremely low use of L1 with less than 1 per cent at the 8th grade level strengthens the belief that it is feasible to conduct EFL lessons at low levels with low amounts of L1 use. It was also my impression, that Anna's lesson was successfully managed.

5.5 Validity, reliability, and transferability

As mentioned several times, there are great limitations with regard to the validity, reliability, and transferability of this study. The study is first and foremost prone to observer bias, where my own perceptions, and beliefs may influence the interpretations both in the observations and in the interviews. I have tried to counteract this bias through self-reflection, and actively seeking out my own bias out (see chapter 3). The findings of the study can also be biased by the informants themselves, through an observer effect, which occurs when people being observed behave differently just because they are being observed. It has been endeavoured to avoid this through using an interview guide, providing equal settings, and consistency in the procedures. Not the least, the study's topic was not revealed before after the observations. I have also attempted to increase the validity of the findings through triangulation (see chapter 3), by using multiple sources of data to yield the same findings. Furthermore, reliability-checks have been performed in the analysis, where the different L1 situations were coded. However, more than one researcher throughout the observations and analysis would have strengthened the reliability considerably. This would also be the case for interviews, even though it has been endeavoured to maintain the reliability through the interview guide and similar procedures in the analysis.

The main limitation of the study is though the size of the sample. The sample comprises only six informants, and the findings may be a result of individual differences between the teachers, and due to coincidence. On the other hand, the study's results are more or less supported by previous research, which contributes to the study's transferability. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that I am not attempting to establish any causal relationships among the factors and the teachers' use of L1. The motivation for the study is an attempt to understand the explanatory factors that initiate L1 use in relation to both quantity and purpose. The discussion therefore suggests several factors that may have influenced the results. There might also be other additional factors that can explain the varying L1 use. This study is nevertheless, only valid for this sample, and it cannot be generalised to a larger context nor predict with any certainty the purposes for which a given teacher elsewhere will use the L1 rather than the L2. In order establish any causal relationships between the suggested factors and the use of L1, more research is needed.

5.6 Chapter summary

In the present study, two types of variation in L1 use in EFL instruction is shown. On the one hand, the quantity of L1 use display rather inconsistent findings, and the variations suggest that there are several teacher-centred factors that may predict the amounts of L1 use. These factors are related to the teachers' attitudes and choices. On the other hand, the patterns of L1 use appear to be explained by student-centred factors. The teachers at the different levels display different patterns, which implies that the language choices might be based on the presupposition of what the learners can handle. The students' level of proficiency and maturation are considered as influencing the situations the L1 is used in.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the concept of comprehensible input is used as a foundation in facilitative language learning. It is also suggested that the teachers, regardless of L1/L2 attitude, reflect critically on their L1 use, and its consequences, before using the L1 in EFL instruction.

6 Conclusion

In this final section I discuss the implications of the study's findings, provide some suggestions for further research and make a few conclusive remarks.

6.1 Implications of the findings

In the present study, lower and upper secondary school are compared with regard to the teachers' use of L1 in EFL instruction, and the question of what explains these variations is attempted answered. The study's findings indicate that there are a number of factors that explain the variation in L1 use, and that there seems to be different explanations for the variation in quantity of L1 use and the variation in the different patterns of L1 use.

First, the factors related to explaining the teachers' quantity of L1 use are teacher proficiency and competence, ability to adjust the L2, their L1/L2 attitude, and their perception of their students' proficiency and comprehension level. The study's findings show that these factors possibly are connected to the quantity of L1 use.

Second, the purposes of L1 use seem to be explained by student-centred factors such as natural progression in proficiency levels and student maturity.

As argued in this thesis, the use of L1 in EFL instruction may indeed affect the language learning, and the fact that the teachers' L1 use varies from almost zero to 50 per cent can hardly be acceptable.

As explained in the discussion chapter, I argue that teacher-centred factors form the foundation for appropriate L1 use in EFL instruction. Accordingly, increased attention around the use of L1 in EFL instruction is needed. Furthermore, a minimum requirement should be that the teachers are competent and confident enough in their EFL teaching to be able use the L1 appropriately as a cognitive tool. This combined with their knowledge of communication breakdown and comprehensible input, and a critical attitude to their use, should enable the teachers to adjust their L2 more appropriately. The teachers could also prepare alternative L2 strategies in advance that can be used in these situations.

Since the LK06 does not provide any guidelines for the L1 use in EFL instruction, this might contribute to the uncritical and potential overuse of the L1. The consultation of the new curriculum does integrate and emphasise oral communication to a larger extent. Still, it could possibly be an idea for the local school department to agree on how they want to use the L1, and not the least contribute to increased language understanding for the EFL instructors. In

other words, to get a better understanding of L1 use with regard to the L1/L2 debate, in addition to the facilitative and detrimental aspects of its use.

All in all, the teachers can first and foremost contribute to progress and improvement with regard to L1 use in EFL instruction by *critically* evaluating their own use of L1.

6.2 Suggestions for further research

In chapter 3, I stated that the extent to which the findings of this study can be transferable to other settings is limited for several reasons. First, the study's results are based on a small and purposive sample comprising only six informants. A more carefully designed sample, in addition to more informants, would have given the study better transferability. Second, the coding of some of the L1 situations were challenging, and the situations are subject to miscoding even though reliability-checks were performed on the most ambiguous situations. However, the supporting research increases the transferability of the study, but still it must be made certain reservations of individual and coincidental findings among the informants.

This study suggests several directions for further research. Obviously, a larger sample comprising more informants could be used to obtain results that are transferable to a larger extent. It would also be interesting to investigate other levels of teaching, more specifically the 10th grade at lower secondary level, and VG1 at upper secondary level in order to understand what happens in the process. One option would also be to follow the same teachers in several different EFL classes, and at different levels in order to see whether the teachers change their L1 use with regard to the different types of students. It could also be an idea to follow Kirsti Klette's video taping from several FL classes from the PISA project in order to get a better understanding of L1 use. Furthermore, future research may also include EFL students and their perceptions on L1 use, which could also be done in a quantitative survey.

6.3 Concluding remarks

After working on this master thesis, I feel that this project has given me knowledge about L1 use that can be useful for my future teaching-career, and hopefully for other teachers as well. I now realise to greater extent, that the L1 can be used both beneficially and detrimentally. And as a final note, it could be interesting to again reflect more on what teacher Ben said in his interview as quoted in the introduction: "How do you teach English in Norwegian?"

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The interview guide

Appendix 2: The observation guide

Appendix 3: Related research

Appendix 1: The interview guide

Lærerbakgrunn

Hvor lenge har du undervist i engelsk?

På hvilke nivå har du undervist (f. eks 8. trinn og VG3)?

Hvilke utdanning har du?

Har du studert/bodd utenlands i et engelskspråklig land over en lengre periode?

Undervisningsfilosofi

Generelt om læring

Hva mener du er den beste måten å lære og lære bort et fremmed språk på?

Hva oppfatter du som målene for dine studenter i din engelskundervisning?

Om norskbruk

Hva mener du om bruk av norsk (L1) i engelskundervisningen?

Er det noen spesiell type L1-bruk som er passende?

Er det noen spesiell type L1-bruk som er upassende?

Er det noen faktorer som kan utløse bruken?

Har du noen formening om fordeling av norsk og engelsk i undervisningen?

Spesifikk "konfrontering" om evt bruk observert i timen (for den aktuelle læreren)

Tilpasning/sammenligning

Opplever du at din egen bruk av norsk (L1) i undervisningssammenheng endrer seg med elevenes klassetrinn? (Altså fra for eksempel 8. trinn til VG3?)

I forhold til kvantitet?

I forhold til funksjon?

Lærerbakgrunn

Hvordan opplever du din egen muntlig undervisning?

Hvordan føler du din egen ferdighet/kompetanse er i muntlig engelsk?

Føler du deg like komfortabel i undervisningen når du snakker engelsk som når du snakker norsk?

Opplevelse av studentenes ferdigheter

Hva er din opplevelse av dine elevers ferdigheter i engelsk?

Når du snakker engelsk (L2) i timen, hvor godt tror du de forstår deg?

Skolepolitikk

Har din skole noen retningslinjer om muntlig undervisning i fremmedspråk?

Har dere noen retningslinjer for fordeling av L1/L2?

På hvilke måter, om noen, tror du at du underviser annerledes enn andre i din avdeling?

- *LK06*

Ut ifra kompetansemålene fra LK06 er det noen endringer du kan gjøre for din egen undervisning?

-*Ny læreplan – høring*

Hva synes du om at muntlige ferdigheter er såpass vektlagt i utkastet av den nye læreplanen som skal opp til høring?

Vil dette kunne endre noe i klasserommet fremover?

Lærers kunnskap

Forskning tilsier at det å maksimere engelsk i muntlig undervisning er en fordel, men samtidig bruke norsk på passende steder kan være fordelaktig – hva er din mening om dette?

Hvor godt synes du engelsklærerutdanningen din har forberedt deg til muntlig undervisning på engelsk?

Appendix 2: Observation categories

1. *Translation (both immediate and delayed)*: the teacher uses the L1 to give the translation of a word or expression, without asking the students for the meaning or taking the time to check students' comprehension. In the case of delayed translation the translation is for example prompted by questions from one of the students. This category mostly conforms to plain translations, particularly to single-words, with and without equivalents in the L2. Whole utterances can also be coded as translations, when the purpose of the L1 is the translation itself.

2. *Discipline (classroom management)*: for teacher maintenance of discipline; the teacher uses the L1 to deal with lack of concentration, noise, talk, misconduct, etc.

3. *Task instruction (classroom management):* the teacher uses the L1 to give instructions for an activity or a task.

4. *Solidarity*: the teacher uses the L1 in a sense of closeness with students either to show understanding or to create a friendly support. Chatting with the students as a whole or with groups and individuals is also registered as solidarity.

5. *Grammar explanation*: the teacher uses the L1 to help explain grammar.

6. *To convey meaning*: the teacher uses the L1 to convey meaning of e.g. a new topic. This function can be motivated by a belief that the students would not understand, or motivated by a student's question. This also includes the teacher's checking of comprehension. This category is also defined more loosely than the others, and situations that are not appropriate for any of the other categories often fall into this category.

Appendix 3: Related research

The different theoretical perspectives have now been presented, and it might be useful to explore the relevant research conducted on the use of first language in the second and foreign language classrooms. I will review the studies chronologically. In the history of research on L1 use in the FL classroom, the first studies conducted typically focused on the quantity of L1, while the development within the fields displays more specificity concerning other variables as well. The one study conducted in the Norwegian context will also be briefly presented. The studies of Duff and Polio (1990), Polio and Duff (1994), and Grim (2010) are of great relevance for this master thesis, and the research performed in this thesis are to a large extent based on many of the elements from these three studies.

Quantifying and categorizing classroom L1 use

One of the first studies explicitly addressing the topic of classroom first language use was performed by Wing (1980) in her doctoral dissertation. This study focuses on the patterns of second language use the teachers exhibit in the classroom (Wing, 1980, p. 160). Wing (1980) found that the "foreign language teacher uses the target language [L2] slightly more than half of the time while speaking in the classroom (…)" (p.165). The study reported a mean of 54 per cent of L2 use, showing great variation in the foreign language use.

Two of the most prominent researchers in the area of L1 and L2 use in the classroom are Duff and Polio. There are two studies that specifically pose some questions regarding the teachers' language choice in a FL context. The first study carried out by the duo Duff and Polio (1990), was a qualitative study of instructors code choices in 13 university-level classes. Duff and Polio (1990) investigate three different factors; the *ratio* of L1 and L2 use, what *factors* are related to the use of L1 and L2, and what the teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes are regarding the use of L1 in a FL classroom. Like its predecessors, this study also yielded a very broad range in the ratio of L2 and L1 use, from ten to 100 per cent (p. 161) In their discussion different variables related to the L1/L2 use are discussed. Duff and Polio (1990) emphasize that the study is not a way of establishing any causal relationships between the variables and effects, but that they suggest factors that "may have influenced the results" (p. 161). These factors are by the researchers divided into *classroom external* and *classroom internal factors.* The classroom external factors are shortly explained as factors that do *not* vary from minute to minute in the classroom, but are of course pertinent

to the discourse that unfolds (Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 315). The internal factors are addressed only in terms of teachers' reported perceptions in the 1990-study (Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 315). Nonetheless, the external factors include the overall L2 proficiency of the students, the teacher's perception of L1/L2 distance, the teacher's educational background, and the departmental policy regarding the role of English. These are also among the factors that are examined for this master thesis (see chapter 4 and 5). The results show that instructors opted to use the L1 in many administrative or other situations where the L2 could have been used. Concerning the classroom external variables no causal relationships were intended to be found, but the only factor that was speculated to be influential was the one of teacher's proficiency level in their L1; "we can discount the role of the teachers' English (L1) proficiency as a factor influencing the amount of L2 use in classes" (Duff & Polio, 1990, p. 161). There was not enough continuity in the other variables that any "influential" relationships of importance could be seen. Still, in their opinion the use of L1 in the context it was used for deprived the students of many opportunities to process the L2 for a range of communicative functions.

The (1994) Polio and Duff study, which is a follow-up of their previous study, takes it all a step further and explores the *how* and *when* of L1 use in an L2 context. The *classroom internal variables* are now under investigation; variables related to features of language use or activities at a given time in the classroom (Polio & Duff, 1994, p. 315). Polio and Duff (1994) try to look inside the "black box" at some of the proposed variables. In the result section it proves that the six university classes identify eight common uses of L1 in an L2 environment (p. 314). These are all variables related to classroom internal variables, i.e. classroom management, grammar instruction, to index a stance of empathy. The variables are divided into three main categories: function of item/utterance(s) produced, difficulty of language being used and interactive effect (Polio & Duff, 1994, pp. 316-20). The investigation of function of item/utterance, L1 use for such as classroom management or grammar instruction, are the most relevant for the study at hand. Polio and Duff (1994)'s findings illustrated a general lack of teacher awareness as to how, when, and the extent to which they actually used the L1, and it also displayed very inconsistent findings (p. 320). They also add that "these teachers have some sense, then, that using the TL [the L2] as much as possible is important; however, they may not have figured out how to do so" (Polio and Duff, 1994, p. 324). However, the most common use of the L1 found in their study was for isolated L1 words related to the academic context, and Duff and Polio (1994) explains this as

a possible warrant of L1 use to ensure that information is conveyed (p. 321). With respect to the use of L1 for classroom management, the teachers claimed it was efficient and helped maintain order in the classroom, in which the researchers disagree and claim that such instructions can be "easily taught", and used frequently, it should be easily understood from the context (p. 322). The teachers also explained the deployment of L1 use to create solidarity as important and as creating a "enjoyable classroom atmosphere", which is claimed by Polio and Duff (1994) to prevent students from receiving input and consequently leading to potential communication breakdowns.

Thompson (2006) observes the contexts for L1 use of 16 university instructors of Spanish in his doctorial dissertation and compares different levels of teaching within the university of Arizona. His data were very extensive, as he not only asked for teachers' opinions of their own linguistic use, but also analysed their speech. He found that the level of instruction might have influenced the amount and type of L1 use. At beginning levels, the L1 was mostly used for grammar instruction, while, at intermediate levels, translation of new vocabulary was the primary reason for the L1. Raising the issue of level differences, Thompson (2006) notices that teachers will typically use the L1 more recurrently with lower levels of instruction and will more likely focus on grammatical discourse. At higher levels of instruction, vocabulary negotiation seems to be the main cause for L1 use. Overall, Thompson's findings closely matched Polio and Duff (1994)'s (Grim, 2010, pp. 195-96; Thompson, 2006). The quantity of the instructors L1 use ranges from 45 to nearly 100 per cent, but it is not specified whether there are differences between the 1st and 4th year at the university (Thompson, 2006, p. 228).

Macaro's (2001) observed six student teachers during their student teaching experience in secondary schools (the pupils were 11-14 years of age). His findings of quantity of L1 use deviate from the other studies, and show an average of 4.8 per cent of L1 use (Macaro, 2001, p. 537). The L1 use was primarily motivated by vocabulary clarification, translation, grammar explanations, discipline, relationship building, and procedural instructions (Macaro, 2001, p. 545).

One of the most relevant studies for this thesis is the one of Grim (2010). He investigates the functions for L1 use in teachers' L2 speech and identifies differences that may exist between high school teachers' (HS) and college instructors' L1 practices. The classes were both 3rd-semesters of French "in order to provide a relatively close comparison regarding students' proficiency between their classes and the college instructors" (Grim, 2010; 197). He identifies the same categories as in previous research, but also recognises

additional categories as immediate and delayed translation. The 15 hours of data from the 11 French HS and college teachers are then compared. The overall findings suggest that HS teachers and college instructors share some common L1 usages: empathy/solidarity, immediate translation and delayed translation and that they appear to differ in metalinguistic explanations, task instructions and class management/discipline (Grim, 2010, p. 203). According to Grim (2010) the HS teachers felt compelled to use the L1 for class management/discipline, while college instructors did not encounter any needs for class management or discipline. HS teachers also used the L1 to give instructions for specific tasks, while college teachers did not encounter any need. Likewise, HS teachers did not give any metalinguistic explanations, while some of the college instructors used the L1 to bring some forms to attention (Grim, 2010, pp. 203-4). Also, in his present study, the major difference was observed mostly with the student teachers (Grim, 2010, pp. 206-7). Grim (2010) implies that the teachers' language choice may be based on presuppositions of what learners can cognitively handle, and suggests as Thompson (mentioned above) that higher levels of instructions' main objective for L1 use is academically related (pp. 206-7). Grim's (2010) findings also show inconsistencies in relation to quantity of L1 use, and no linear relationship between students' proficiency level and quantity of use is established (p. 206).

The only Norwegian contribution to the area of L1 use in the L2 classroom is the master thesis of Bollerud (2002). She touches upon the quantity measures of L1 use in the primary school, and concludes that "this is first and foremost because of a high percentage of unqualified English teachers" (Bollerud, 2002, p. 93). Yet, her findings are based questionnaires with the teachers' self-evaluation on their estimated L1 use.

Overall, the research findings show contradictory results concerning both quantitative use and functions of the L1. But yet, the few studies that compare the different proficiency levels imply that there are some differences in the different types of uses between lower and higher levels.

This study will for the first time explore how the L1 is used at the Norwegian lower and upper secondary levels. It will also elaborate on the specific purposes of use of the L1 at the separate levels. The lower secondary and upper secondary levels will be studied both individually and be contrasted, in terms of quantity of L1 use, in addition to a study of the specific L1 uses purposes.